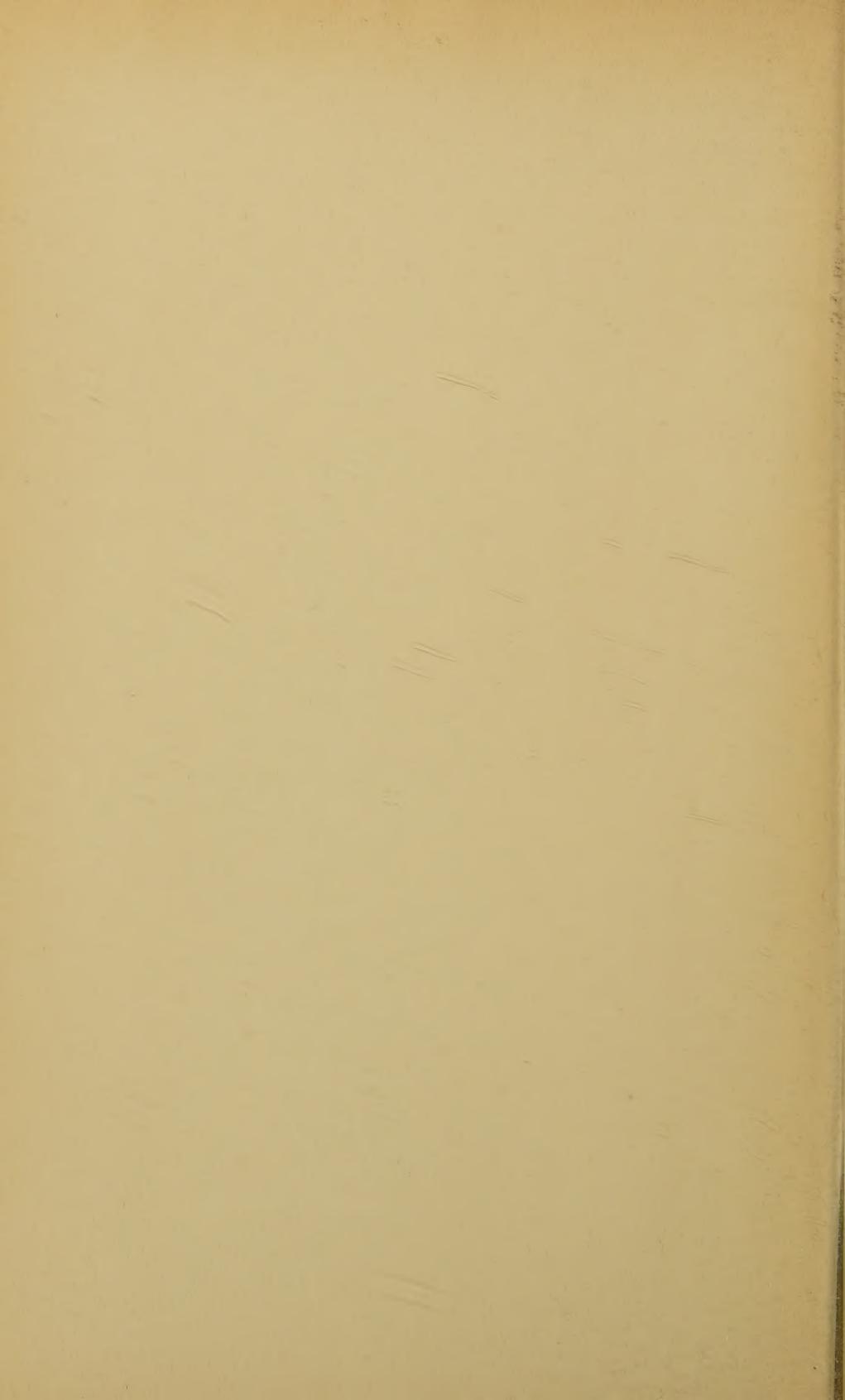


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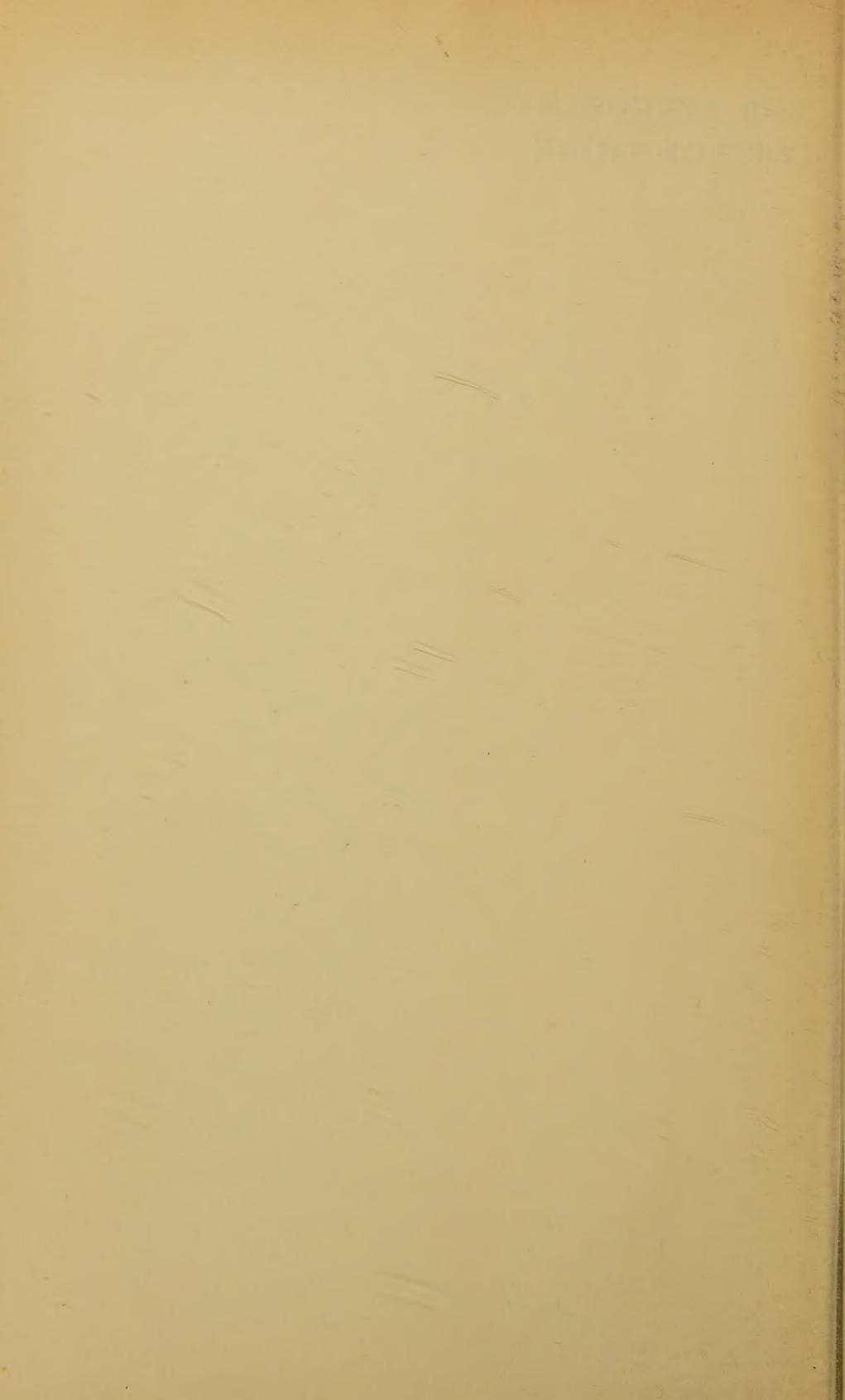
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The struggle for the Rhine



THE STRUGGLE
FOR THE RHINE



THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RHINE

BY

HERMANN STEGEMANN

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Translated from the German

BY

GEORGES CHATTERTON-HILL



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FOREWORD

A book dealing with the historic struggle for possession of the Rhine would appear to need no introduction nowadays. But, perhaps, I may nevertheless be permitted to send out this volume, the object of which is to detach that struggle from the background of world history—to isolate it, so to speak, from environing phenomena, and study it as a theme *per se*—accompanied by a brief foreword.

It is undeniably venturesome to attempt to study the subject throughout successive centuries after thus strictly delimiting its scope, and I am well aware of the difficulties of my task. Whilst, generally speaking, the subject is viewed and treated from the broad standpoint of European politics, it is also envisaged under the aspect of a military struggle, as an episode of military history; hence it assumes a new significance, which everyone who wishes to understand the real importance of the struggle for the Rhine should grasp. If, consequently, I lay more stress on the heroic nature of that struggle than is usual in professedly historical works, and if its outcome should even appear at times to be determined by remorseless fate, yet it would be wholly erroneous to conclude that my aim has been to compose a drama of human destiny.

The struggle for the Rhine is largely determined by the character and historical evolution of those nations which participate in it. If, however, it presents itself mainly as a struggle of the Germans for national existence, this is due to geographical factors and strategic laws which my book is the first to discuss from the point of view of their influence on history. The conclusions at which I have arrived are laid down in the following pages. My book is not based on new researches in the domain of general history. Its object has been to sift and classify definitely ascertained events, and

to unite them in a coherent whole. These events stretch back to those far-off days when the Rhine first appeared on history's stage. The Great War, which destroyed nineteenth-century Europe and suppressed the traditional balance of European power, is only referred to cursorily, since a detailed description of this latest struggle for possession of the Rhine would have completely upset my entire plan. I may be permitted to refer readers desirous of further details on the subject to my work *Die Geschichte des Krieges* (4 vols., 1914-1918). The latter has been completed and assigned its proper place in historical literature by the present book, which sheds new light on those lessons taught us by the Great War. For the events recounted and analysed in my *History of the War*, viewed in the light of what is here described, appear as predestined to happen. This explains why I could not withstand the temptation to sketch, as a logical completion of my story of the World War, the history of the struggle for the Rhine. Future generations will discover that this struggle has not yet been definitely decided.

I have taken the liberty of dedicating my book to the German People—not in any spirit of arrogance or in the hope of thereby increasing its circulation, since it is by no means intended solely for German eyes. The only consideration prompting me to do so is my desire to prove precisely at the present time that I have not lost confidence in the German people. Germany's mission has not yet been fulfilled. To assert the contrary would be to affirm absolute scepticism as regards Europe's future destinies, to disbelieve in the possibility of attaining a higher state of social evolution and a solidarity of nations which shall be more efficacious because it is a living and conscious one.

HERMANN STEGEMANN.

MUNICH.

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The Struggle for the Rhine

CHAPTER I

THE RHINE AND ITS BASIN BEFORE THEIR ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF ANCIENT HISTORY

The Rhine viewed as central problem of Western European politics—Configuration of the river—Geographical and military points of view—Unity of the river basin—The Rhine considered as a political factor—Dawn of history—Celts—Romans on the Rhône—Cimbri and Teutons—Arausio, Aque Sextiae, Vercelli—Rhine and Rhône—German tribes on the Upper Rhine—Ariovistus—Julius Cæsar—Battle of Bibracte—Cæsar and Ariovistus—The claim to Gaul—The so-called “Ariovistus Battle”—Cæsar’s conquest of Gaul.

No river in the world stands out more prominently in history than the Rhine. From the moment of its entry on the stage of history, its bed has been the scene of incessant struggles—although the Rhine, far from separating its banks from one another, forms a natural connecting-link between them. And the fight for possession of the river is so essential a part of the struggle for supremacy in Europe, that this fight has, right up to our own times, constituted a decisive developmental factor of European politics.

As a matter of fact, the possession of no river-basin in the world has been so hotly and persistently contested as that of the Rhine. Nor has the outcome of any epoch-making struggle ever been less clear than in this case. The struggle has hitherto remained undecided, and we may predict with some degree of certainty that it will remain undecided until the Rhine has ceased to constitute the central problem of West European politics—a problem, the solution of which has been vainly sought during the last two thousand years.

Nature’s master-hand has dug the bed of the Rhine deep in the earth’s crust. Its source lies in the Gletscher lakes

between Mount St. Gotthard and the Julian Alps, whence the river flows northwards in three narrow channels, its volume being increased by torrents from the Grison and Glarus Alps. Rushing wildly through deep ravines in a northerly direction, it reaches the Lake of Constance. Fifty miles north-west of the spot where it enters this beautiful lake, on the shores of which three German-speaking countries are situated, the Rhine leaves it to pursue its course towards the setting sun.

So long as the Rhine endeavours to cut its path through the Alps, all other natural routes seem unconsciously to run parallel with it. One single route deviates, and appears to lead away from the river. This cross-road, which commences between Ragatz and Sargans, connects the Rhine valley with the Lake of Zurich; here the Limmat takes its rise and flows in a north-westerly direction, seeking—like the Reuss—to find a way to the Aar. The course of the Limmat, together with the two extensive lakes of Constance and Zürich, constitutes the first great strategic sector of the Rhine basin. The space contained between the lakes in question dominates Southern Germany's south-western flank. A natural point of irruption is to be found between the Lake of Constance and the Falls of the Rhine, where a wide depression leads to the region in which the source of the Danube lies. A thousand-year-old ruin on the Hohentwiel's conical peak overlooks this plain. Ever since the earliest twilight of history this spot has resounded to the clash of arms and the tramp of migrating tribes, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century it still remained a battleground of warring peoples.

After leaving the Lake of Constance the Rhine flows westwards for about sixty miles, cutting its way through the rocky mass of the Jura and receiving the water of numerous affluents on either side. It then penetrates into a fertile plain stretching northwards along a considerable distance, and henceforth continues its course in a northerly direction. At its vertex, occupying an important strategic position, lies Bâle. Here is the great gateway through which Celts, Germans, and Romans passed. From here it flows swiftly between the Vosges and the Black Forest, its volume being constantly increased by a number of tributaries, among them being

the Neckar, on the right bank, the Lauter and Queich, on the left.

The Vosges form a double and triple row of formidable partition-walls separating the Rhine from Western Europe, and descending precipitously towards the East. The Black Forest is more easily accessible from the river, but on the whole its characteristics, despite certain individual differences, are similar to those of the Vosges. The passes through the Vosges are narrow *cols* to which zigzag paths lead, whereas the Black Forest Passes are in the nature of broad depressions between surrounding peaks, and are more conveniently reached. Most of the Vosges's streams flow north-westwards into the Moselle, which then unites with the Meurthe and Saar, and, describing a wide circle, cuts its way through the Hunsrück and the Eifel to join the Rhine.

In the elevated valley opening immediately east of the Black Forest heights, the Danube takes its rise. This is the only river in the region, the waters of which are not ultimately united with those of the Rhine. All the other streams flowing eastwards from the Black Forest feed the Neckar, one of the Rhine's principal tributaries, which at Heidelberg gives access to the great natural fruit-garden that spreads along the Rhine's upper course.

The western approach to the plain of the Upper Rhine is situated farther upstream, near the mouth of the Ill. It is formed by the Saverne Pass, which leads between the Vosges and the River Haardt into the Lower Alsatian lowland. The Saverne Pass, which to-day skirts the canal linking-up Rhine and Marne, forms, if we follow the valley of the Marne upstream *via* Nancy, the shortest route between the basin of the Seine and Strasbourg.

During many centuries the strategic pendulum in the struggle for the Rhine has swung to and fro between Saverne and Heidelberg. If Bâle lies on the Rhine as a flanking-position before the Jura and the Burgundian Gate, Strasbourg stands as a fortress guarding the entrance to the Saverne Pass. Both serve as defensive positions against an enemy advancing from the West. At the same time Bâle constitutes a strong attacking base against the North; Strasbourg a powerful bridgehead against the East, commanding the Black Forest Passes.

The centre of the entire Rhine basin lies farther north, there where Main and Nahe empty their waters into the main river. The Gate of the Main is the great entrance-gate through which every invader from the West has passed in order to gain access to the interior of Germany. For many centuries the heart of the latter lay here. Invaders have a choice of routes: either they can march through the valleys of the Wetter and Kinzig to the Weser; or they can proceed upstream along the Main to the Thuringian Forest, so as to reach the Saale or the Eger. The Main links-up Rhine and Elbe; through it the Rhine is indissolubly connected with central Germany. Nature has destined the Main to be a great *line of communication between East and West*; but it would be fundamentally erroneous to consider it a natural *line of separation between North and South*. The Main, by joining-up the Fichtelgebirge with the Taunus Hills, likewise forms a connecting-link between Eastern Germany and the Rhine.

The narrowest, and also most romantic, part of the Rhine lies between the Taunus, at the southern foot of which it makes a bend in a westerly direction, and the Hunsrück. At Coblenz, where it receives the waters of the Moselle, it becomes wider. The Moselle, into which flow the Meurthe, the Saar, and the rivulets of the Ardennes and the Eifel, links-up the Rhine with the mountains bounding the latter's basin in the West. Farther north the Rhine receives the Ruhr, the last tributary to flow into it through mountainous territory. Shortly afterwards a broad plain begins, which, on the right bank, is surrounded by the last spurs of the Central German mountain-chains. These spurs, known to antiquity as the Osning Hills, and familiar to later times as the Teutoburg Forest, conceal the source of the Lippe, the last important affluent flowing into the Rhine from the East. Between the Ruhr and the Lippe, between Duisburg and Paderborn, lies the key to North-Western Germany.

Here again, at this spot, the traveller who follows the Rhine from source to estuary cannot fail to be powerfully impressed by the essential unity of the entire river basin. Shortly after receiving the Lippe's waters, the Rhine enters Dutch territory, whence it flows through five arms into the North Sea. One of these arms, known as the Waal, is fed by the Meuse. If the Meuse be included among the streams

belonging to the Rhine basin, the strategic key to the extreme west of the latter may be found between Liége and Dordrecht.

From source to estuary the Rhine measures over 750 miles in length. Its basin contains vast coal and ore mines, the region watered by it is exceedingly fertile, and it has become the most important commercial waterway in Europe. But the struggle for its possession—a struggle dating back to the dawn of history and which is still undecided to-day—has only been secondarily determined by the desire to possess the wealth of the surrounding region. Primarily it has always been a struggle for mastery over the Rhine itself. It is a struggle between East and West. *Possession of the Rhine enables—and has invariably enabled—a conqueror from the South or West to control the entire Central European zone and therefore to dominate Europe; whereas the inhabitants of its right bank need the Rhine to maintain their independence.* Hence for the French, in the West, the struggle for the Rhine is motivated by political ambition; for the Germans, in the East, it is a problem of national survival. This is a fact eloquently proved by the tragic experiences of two thousand years.

When the first migrations of tribes become visible in the Rhine basin, the European continent between Vistula and Atlantic, North Sea and Alps, is still, politically speaking, a vacuum. Civilization was confined to the Mediterranean, and the Alps formed the political world's northern boundary. Ligurian tribes lay isolated on and around the banks of the Lake of Geneva. Upstream along the Danube a line of demarcation stretched to the Save and the Alps, and then followed the Rhône to the Mediterranean. North of this line nomadic barbarians resided. The Rhine proved no obstacle to their wanderings. The Celts were the first historic people to cross its banks. They penetrated through the Burgundian Gate into the valleys of the Doubs, Saône, and Rhône; pushed their way into the Upper Rhenish plain, and settled on the slopes of the Vosges and the Haardtwald; proceeded upstream along the Moselle to the Meuse, reached the Scheldt, and established themselves on the shores of the North Sea; arrived in the basin of the Seine, crossed the Channel, and peopled the British Isles.

The migrations of the Celts lasted for centuries. From the lower reaches of the Rhône and the banks of the Garonne they crossed the Pyrenees, and intermingled beyond them with the Iberians. A congestion taking place, superfluous masses streamed backwards into Southern France, and flooded the plains of Northern Italy. Here they collided subsequently with the Romans, who, when the Celts first reached Lombardy, were still confined to the Tiber.

When, in 218 B.C., Rome's legions set out to encounter Hannibal on the Rhône, they were unaware of the Rhine's existence. *Yet unwittingly, by attempting, already at that date, to make the Rhône the strategic frontier of her empire, Rome initiated the struggle for the Rhine.*

The attempt failed, since Hannibal forestalled his adversary; by missing her opportunity, Rome lost the Second Punic War on Italian battlefields. Not until a century later did she return in triumph to the Rhône and conquer its delta. Shortly afterwards the eastern gates of Italy fell into her hands when a Roman Army crossed the Isonzo to subdue Celtic tribes beyond. This expedition brought Rome for the first time into contact with Germany. The Germanic tribe of the Cimbri, searching for more fertile pastures, crossed the Danube, and appeared before the eastern entrance to Upper Italy.

The Romans forbade these hitherto unknown barbarians access to the former's territories, and, after useless palavers, a battle ensued, which ended disastrously for the Romans. But the Cimbri did not take advantage of this success to enter Italy, preferring to roam farther westwards—as fate would have it, in the direction of the Rhine. Thus, at the very beginning of German history, we find recorded a victory that bore no fruit owing to the victors' lack of political instinct.

In 109 B.C. the Cimbri—their strength having meanwhile been accrued by that of the Teutons and other Germanic tribes—appeared for the second time at the gates of the Roman Empire, this time at the estuary of the Rhône, at the western entrance to Italy. Again the barbarians demanded land and corn, which were again refused them; and again there was a clash of arms which ended in a Roman defeat. But the victors did not profit by their success this time either. They

turned aside eastwards through the Provence, towards the Garonne. Rome sent an Army under Consul Cassius Longinus in pursuit, but it was defeated, and compelled to pass through the Caudine Forks. The Germans continued their wanderings in the direction of the Loire.

Four years later we find them once more on the Rhône's banks, where they defeated the Roman Army at Arausio. They then retired again westwards, only to return three years later to the Italian frontier. But having missed three favourable opportunities of gaining access to that country, they were not destined to find a fourth. They divided their forces. The Cimbri proceeded towards the Brenner, intending to enter Italy from the North-East ; whereas the Teutons, with a following of Celts, descended the Rhône to the Ligurian coast. Thus divided, they proved no match for the Romans under Marius. The Teutons were routed at Aquæ Sextiæ, the Cimbri at Vercelli. It is interesting to note that the Cimbri followed one of the routes leading from the Rhine basin through the Alpine passes towards the South ; whereas the Teutons were exterminated at the terminus of that great line of movement which joins the North with the Mediterranean.

Strategically speaking, Rhône and Rhine are directly connected with each other. For a conqueror coming from the South they form one single line of movement stretching from the Mediterranean to the North Sea.

In 72 B.C., thirty years after the destruction of Cimbri and Teutons, Germanic tribes established themselves on either bank of the Upper Rhine. Ariovistus, the first Germanic War-Lord known to history, having been called by Celtic tribes to help them against other Celts, crossed the Rhine at the mouth of the Neckar. In 59 B.C. Ariovistus's authority extended from the Neckar to the Saône. He lived on friendly terms with the Romans, who recognized him as King over the territory subdued by him, until the day when Julius Cæsar—who needed military triumphs, tributes, and a disciplined Army, in order to establish his own dictatorship over Rome—resolved to conquer the rich country behind the Cévennes and the Côte d'Or. With this object in view, Cæsar invaded the valley of the Rhône. He knew that he could not accomplish his aim without colliding with Ariovistus ; but he decided to postpone an inevitable

collision until the Rhône valley should be entirely in his hands. He achieved this first object at the battle of Bibracte, where he crushed the Helvetians. As a result of his victory he advanced to within a short distance of the confluence of the Saône and Doubs, some 95 miles north of Lyons. The road to the dominions of Ariovistus was now open to him.

Having assured himself of the support of the Celts, on whom the strong warrior hand of Ariovistus lay heavily, Cæsar posed as champion of the Gauls against Germanic oppression. His real object was to conquer the line of the Rhône and Rhine, and thereby render himself master of the whole of Gaul. Ariovistus, for his part, claimed a right of conquest in nowise inferior to Cæsar's, since he also had been summoned to Gaul by Gallic tribes ; he further relied on treaties with Rome, which, however, had ceased to be operative *de facto* since the battle of Bibracte.

The question admitted of no other solution than by force of arms, after negotiations, culminating in a personal interview between Cæsar and Ariovistus, had failed. The first regular pitched battle in the struggle for the Rhine took place. We do not know the exact spot of this decisive encounter, but it was on the eastern slopes of the Vosges, between Thann and Altkirch. Victory rested with the Romans, and Ariovistus fled with the remnants of his forces in a north-easterly direction towards the Rhine. With a handful of faithful followers he succeeded in crossing the river, but not a square yard of his possessions on the left bank remained to him.

The victory thus obtained by Cæsar on the eastern threshold of the Burgundian Gate not only decided the issue of the campaign undertaken by him against the Germanics ; it also settled the fate of Gaul. Rome inherited the dominions of Ariovistus on the Rhine's left bank. The natural unity of the Upper Rhine basin was thereby destroyed, and the Upper Rhine became henceforth a political frontier. Cæsar combined political and strategic considerations. He not merely annihilated the empire of Ariovistus, but also linked-up the two lines of the Rhône and Rhine ; this enabled him in future to threaten Gaul and Germany alike in the flank. He deliberately bestowed the name of Gaul on the entire country between the Rhine and the sea, with the intention of creating

a legal title to his possession of it. Having eliminated Ario-vistus, he declared himself protector of those Celtic tribes he had liberated from the Germanic yoke and brought under Rome's sceptre. From his base on the Rhône and Rhine he conquered semi-barbaric Gaul for Roman civilization, after having freed it from Germanic barbarians. The Gauls, who had summoned Cæsar to their assistance against the latter, were not unreceptive to an argument thus cleverly formulated. They accepted it, and finally adopted it altogether as their own, although the "Ariovistus battle" sealed the fate, not of Germanic, but of Gallic, liberty.

Thus the battle at the entrance to the plain between Vosges and Jura, the exact spot of which cannot be determined, assumes historic importance. It marked the conclusion of the first phase of the struggle for the Rhine and decided for centuries the political destinies of that river's basin.

CHAPTER II

ROMAN RULE ON THE RHINE

Rhine and Bosphorus—Xerxes and Cæsar—Cæsar's determination of frontiers—Incorporation of Gaul in the Roman Empire—Cæsar's *Commentaries*: book iv, chapter xvi—Unity of the Rhine Basin—Roman advance into Germania—Conquest of the Danube—Drusus—Strategic importance of the Main—Subjugation of North-West Germany—P. Quintilius Varus—The Marcomannic King Marbod—Arminius the Cheruscan—The battle in the Teutoburg Forest—Arminius and Marbod—German dualism—Arminius and Germanicus—The liberation of Germania—The German claim to the Rhine.

EUROPEAN politics are to-day dominated by two main problems—those of the Dardanelles and the Rhine. Each of them has been bequeathed us by antiquity, and neither, so far, has been solved.

Centuries separate the crossing of the Hellespont by the Persians under Xerxes in 480 B.C., and Cæsar's advance against the right bank of the Rhine in 55 B.C. Considered politically, however, the two events may be juxtaposed.

When Cæsar crossed the Rhine at Andernach in 55, Gaul lay conquered at his feet. Having successively subdued all the Celtic clans, weakened by internal dissensions, he resolved to erect a permanent barrier between them and the Germanic tribes in the shape of a political frontier, formed no longer by the Upper Rhine only, but by the entire basin of that river. For this purpose he embarked on a war of ruthless destruction against those Germanic peoples who had settled on either bank of the Middle and Lower Rhine. His campaign was fully successful, the tribes in question being literally annihilated. Having accomplished this task, Cæsar crossed over to the right bank, but withdrew to the other side after only eighteen days. But if this first crossing of the Rhine by the Romans was devoid of strategic importance, politically it constitutes the most momentous occurrence in the history of the struggle for the Rhine, and produced infinitely more far-reaching

consequences than did the battle before the Burgundian Gate. Cæsar himself defended his action by alleging that he crossed the Rhine to intimidate the Germanic tribes, and also in response to an appeal for help by the Ubians, who lived on the right bank. He further alleged that the Germanic tribes showed a manifest inclination to "break into Gaul." Cæsar thus again defines the Rhine as forming Gaul's eastern frontier, and he expressly asserts that the Germanic tribes on the right bank had made war "on himself and the Gauls," thereby proclaiming himself anew the latter's protector. He quotes the Germanic Sigambrians as having declared that "Rome's power ceases at the Rhine," and states that they asked him what justification he had—since he himself regarded the crossing of the Rhine by Germanics as illicit—for wielding authority on its right bank. But Cæsar adds that the Ubians informed him that his appearance on the right bank would suffice to protect them against the Suevi, since the Romans had earned, thanks to their victory over Ariovistus, such a reputation among all Germanic tribes that no further proof of Rome's greatness was needed.

These carefully weighed words contain the nucleus of the entire Rhenish problem. Cæsar endeavours to conceal the strategic failure of his crossing of the Rhine, but enunciates at the same time political principles of fundamental historic importance. The Rhenish problem, which still keeps the world in suspense to-day, is for the first time presented to us as *a question of political power*. Cæsar hastens to answer the various questions put by himself, and is careful to quote his opponents themselves in support of his action. Of course the Germanic tribesmen are entitled to protest against an extension of Rome's power to the Rhine's right bank. But does not this protest imply that the Germanics renounce all claim to the left bank? "Rome's power ceases at the Rhine," declare the Sigambrians, according to Cæsar's testimony. And this declaration implicitly admits Rome's right to rule west of the Rhine—it recognizes Gaul, as defined geographically by Cæsar, to be a Roman province.

All of which demonstrates Cæsar's rare dialetical skill in attributing to his opponents the arguments in favour of his own position. But Cæsar's dialectics go farther still. If, on the one hand, they have the effect of confining henceforth

the Germanics to the Rhine's right bank; on the other hand they carefully safeguard Rome's right to intervene on that bank. For this purpose Cæsar points to the Ubians as being, according to their own statements, in need of protection.

The conclusion is obvious. The Germanics are henceforth confined to the right bank, whereas the Romans remain free to decide as they wish on any course of conduct they may deem appropriate. Such is, succinctly stated, the political content of Cæsar's report. Unfortunately, not only for Germany, but for the whole world, the point of view here laid down has survived the Roman Empire right up to the present day.

In 54 and 53 B.C. the Gauls rose against Rome's domination, under which they suffered all the more since Cæsar needed unlimited sums of money to maintain his Army, to carry out his ambitious plans at home, and to increase his *clientèle*. To obtain this money he resorted to every form of extortion. In vain did the Suevi cross over to the left bank in order to come to the insurgents' help. They arrived too late, and were compelled to retire without accomplishing anything. Thereupon Cæsar advanced threateningly into the *patria Germanorum*, but, the Suevi refusing to give battle, he withdrew once more to the left bank. This time, however, he proceeded to quarter a garrison of twelve cohorts at the bridgehead here, so as to possess in future a permanent base of operations against Germania. Thus the Rhine became a strategic frontier, in addition to being a political one.

By their incorporation in the Roman Empire, and their consequent absorption in the sphere of Helleno-Roman culture, the Gallic Celts lost both their independence and their national characteristics. As Celts they had enjoyed freedom, but as Gauls they were only Roman subjects. Soon an intensive process of intermingling with the conquerors set in, and the Latin language rapidly superseded the ancient Gallic tongue. Immigrants from all parts of the world-empire, especially from Italy and Illyria, streamed into the country. Ex-legionaries were settled there, Roman towns arose everywhere, Roman strategic routes crossed the new colony in all directions, Roman fortresses protected the frontiers, whilst the eclectic Roman religion was substituted for the old Celtic mythology.

Before leaving Gaul, Cæsar regulated the country's civil

and military administration on the basis—already previously formulated by him—of the unity of the entire territory situated between the Atlantic and the Rhine. Having twice invaded England with the object of intimidating the English Celts, and thereby preventing them from coming to the aid of an insurrection in Gaul, he had been able to convince himself of the vital importance for Roman domination of both Rhône and Rhine, from the Mediterranean to the Zuider Zee. For this reason he sought to concentrate his military forces on those two rivers. Although he occasionally took up his quarters at Lutetia, in the basin of the Seine, or in Amiens, on the Somme, he was careful not to scatter the Roman divisions along the Aisne, Somme, and Loire. The Rhine Army secured Gaul alike against the Germanics in the East and the Celts in the West; whilst the main reserves of the Rhenish legions were stationed on the Po.

The sixteenth chapter of the fourth book of Cæsar's *Commentaries* on the Gallic War does not only contain his views of the political situation on the Rhine and an exposition of the diplomatic requirements for a continuation of the campaign; it likewise bequeaths Cæsar's military testament to posterity. Rome's domination did not come to an end at the Rhine; for to remain at that river without crossing it would have meant endangering the possession of the left bank. An independent Gaul could confine itself within its natural frontiers behind the Rhône and Meuse, *i.e.* within a space stretching from the Cévennes *via* the Côte d'Or, the Langres Plateau, the Argonnes, and the Ardennes to the Scheldt; but a Gaul dominated by Rome could not do so. The Roman Empire could not hope to maintain its hold over Gaul, Helvetia, Britain, and the Rhineland, if its troops remained stationary on the Rhine and Drave. Rome was faced by the alternative either of regarding the Alps as her Empire's northern frontier, or of crossing the Rhine and Danube.

The Rhine basin must be in one single hand. To possess only one-half of it involves an insoluble contradiction. The ancient Germanics did not even suspect the existence of such a problem. They were nevertheless compelled by Fate to obey these exigencies when, following in the wake of the Celts, they crossed the Rhine and settled on either bank.

When the Roman conqueror broke into the northern world he destroyed a number of ethnographical ties and other natural connecting-links. He paid the price of his forcible entry into the Rhine basin by being compelled to advance ever farther, and to annex the river's right bank after having annexed its left one. And yet it was only recognition of strategical necessities which drove the Romans to secure the Rhine by endeavouring to gain possession also of the Elbe. The Rhine's left bank, from the Limmat and the Aar to the Moselle, and from the Moselle to the lower reaches of the Meuse, constitutes a vast deployment-ground susceptible of being utilized for operations against East, North, and West alike. But since its right bank, from the Lake of Constance to the Thuringian Forest, and from the Main to the Lippe, is susceptible of being similarly utilized, there can be no possible guarantee of ensuring either permanence of possession or cultural homogeneity unless the whole river-basin be united in a single hand. The Romans understood this necessity. Politically and culturally superior to the ancient Germanics, they deliberately crossed the Rhine after Julius Cæsar's death, in order to secure possession of its right bank and incorporate the entire country as far as the Elbe in their world-empire.

Augustus did not give the signal to advance until the Alpine passes—before which various Celto-Ligurian tribes still continued their struggle for independence—had been secured. A twofold campaign proved successful. Tiberius Nero, Governor of Gaul, marched upstream through the valley of the Rhône, crossed the Helvetian plateau, and reached the Lake of Constance. He then crossed the Rhine at the foot of the Hohentwiel, and pushed forward to the source of the Danube. Victory finally rested with the Roman eagles, and Tiberius appeared triumphant on the southern border of the territory situated on the Rhine's right bank. The entire Upper Rhenish region now known as Baden was exposed to an attack in the rear.

Meanwhile Drusus subdued the tribes on the Adige and the northern slopes of the Eastern Alps, and sought to open the route to the Danube from the South. The Romans accomplished this far-reaching aim in the course of four campaigns, and in 9 B.C. established their mastery over the

Danube. The Eastern Celts submitted to Rome's domination. Rome's Armies menaced Germania's southern flank.

The Danube frontier having been secured, Augustus gave orders to his troops to take the offensive on the Lower Rhine. Preparations in view of such an attack had long since been made. It was no mere punitive expedition which Rome planned, but a campaign on a truly imposing scale, having for its aim the conquest of Germania. The Romans adapted their definition of Germania as a geographical entity to their own special requirements—just as they had done in the case of Gaul. According to this definition the land of the Germanic peoples was bounded by the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe, respectively. The Romans left the Eastern Germanics settled on the Vistula and beyond it—*i.e.* the great migrating tribes of later times—out of account; of the sea-faring Northern Germanics they had but vague knowledge.

The *rôle* of Germania's conqueror was attributed to Drusus. He determined to utilize the districts of the Lippe and Ruhr for the deployment of his Army, so as to acquire a secure footing on the right bank of the Rhine, and thus obtain possession of a strong base of operations. The Germans were unaware of the extent of the danger threatening them. Torn by internal dissensions, they showed no inclination to unite in resisting the common foe. Drusus succeeded in winning over the Germanic inhabitants of the seacoast, whose assistance he would require when crowning his intended frontal thrust by an attack in the enemy's maritime flank.

In the year 11 B.C. Drusus completed the conquest of the Lippe region and prepared to advance on the Weser. Crossing the Osning Pass, he reached the Weser Hills. But the heavy autumn rains proved disastrous for the health of Rome's legions and compelled Drusus to withdraw. Hard pressed by the enemy, he recrossed the Osning Pass and brought his pursuers to a standstill on the Lippe. But although he commenced his strategic offensive in 10 B.C., its fruit did not definitely ripen until the following year. It was a critical moment in history. In the year 9 B.C. we clearly perceive the Main to constitute a natural line of movement for an enemy advancing from the West, and who, once he has secured his right flank, can turn at his choice either northwards or eastwards, either towards the Weser or towards the Elbe.

Such proved the case at the epoch of which we speak. The Roman right flank was not threatened, seeing that Rome already controlled the Danube, and that the Germanic tribes settled between Main and Danube had, in view of this menace, retired behind the Bohemian Forest. Drusus thus found the road open and saw himself in a position to rend Germany asunder by dividing South and North. Having split-up the Rhine basin, he crowned his break-through by a victorious advance in the rear of the Weser tribes. Thus hemmed in on all sides, faced by the Romans on the Rhine and encompassed in the South, cut off from the sea owing to the desertion of the Frisians, weakened by internal strife and demoralized by Roman bribes, the peoples of North-West Germania laid down their arms.

Burning and plundering, Rome's legions advanced to the Elbe, whilst Roman warships cruised before the Weser's mouth. The North-West Germanics sued for peace. They did not propose unconditional submission ; they only asked for Rome's friendship. By means of negotiations, Drusus put them off until the moment when he turned his back to the Elbe. He had accomplished his task. But death overtook him on his journey westwards. Wounds, resulting from a fall from his horse, gangrened ; the dying man handed the baton of commander-in-chief to Tiberius at Mayence, whither Drusus's legionaries transported their mortally injured chief. The Germanics did not endeavour to take advantage of the Roman general's death. No rising took place, and peace negotiations were continued with Tiberius. Weakened by four years of war, menaced by starvation owing to the devastation of their soil, the Germanics had no option but to accept Rome's yoke. Thousands were expelled from the country, thousands of others compulsorily settled on the left bank of the Rhine. Roman tax-collectors appeared everywhere, the Roman code became law.

But Rome also adopted economic measures, which were not less efficacious than the legal ones, and utilized her superior culture to forward her political aims. This policy of "peaceful penetration" proved successful, and before ten years had elapsed the land between Rhine and Elbe appeared quite Romanized and resigned to its fate. The time had now come for Rome to secure the southern frontiers of her new

Germanic colony by the conquest of Bohemia and by pushing forward the Empire's boundaries to the river March. Tiberius appointed the Imperial Legate P. Quintilius Varus commander-in-chief in Northern Germania, placed five legions and the North Sea fleet at his disposal, and then took his departure from the Rhine and moved off in the direction of Bohemia. His object was to dissolve the League of the Marcomanni, which King Marbod, the second historical Germanic monarch,¹ had formed in the region between the Bohemian Forest and the Oder. But at this very moment Illyrians and Panonians, and all the other tribes under Rome's sway between the Adriatic and the Inn, rose in a desperate attempt to throw off the Roman yoke. This rising saved Marbod. The Emperor Augustus stopped the Bohemian campaign and granted the Marcomanni favourable terms, which Marbod, unfortunately for his cause, accepted. He would unquestionably have served better his own interests by an alliance with the insurgents.

The Illyrian insurrection kept Rome occupied during three years. This period marks the great turning-point in the struggle on the Rhine. The Illyrian revolt proved to be the spark which set ablaze the spirit of resistance in Germania. Arminius the Cheruscan appears on the scene.

Arminius had served as a Roman knight in the Imperial Army against the Illyrians, in that fateful struggle which compelled Rome to put fifteen legions into the field, to say nothing of innumerable Germanic mercenaries. He returned home with the definite intention of casting off the Roman yoke in his own country. Although but twenty-six years old, Arminius was ripe beyond his age. To a fiery temperament he united great political ambition. Mere service in Rome's legions no longer sufficed him; for Marbod's kingship excited his envy, and he likewise felt keenly the oppression of his own race. Arminius found a divided people, deeply corrupted by the baleful influence of foreign domination. But, on the other hand, he knew full well the inherent weakness of the position of the Romans, who treated the Weser country just as they would have done an Asiatic satrapy. He thus experienced little difficulty in organizing a conspiracy in view of liberating the Cheruscan from alien rule. He knew that if he succeeded

¹ The first being Ariovistus, pp. 17 *sqq.* (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

in destroying the Roman Army of Occupation which held Germania in thralldom, he would deal a mortal blow at Roman supremacy. Entirely separating himself from his pro-Roman relatives, he resolutely set to work to accomplish this daring aim; and as soon as he deemed the ground sufficiently prepared, he opened the attack. Having ambushed the Army of Varus in the narrow passes of the Teutoburg Forest, amidst the Weser Hills, he annihilated it on September 10th, A.D. 9. The day cost Rome three proud legions and six cohorts, and Varus, perceiving the extent of the disaster, committed suicide in traditional Roman fashion by falling upon his own sword.

Arminius sent the head of his defeated adversary to King Marbod; collecting the arms of the fallen Romans, he equipped his Cheruscans therewith, and summoned all the Germanic tribes to a war of liberation. By so doing Arminius rose above the level of a mere successful warrior to that of a far-sighted statesman, to whose guidance at a critical hour Germania's destinies were confided. Unfortunately King Marbod refused to recognize in Arminius an ally, and turned aside indifferently from the Cheruscan, in order to increase his own personal power and to conclude peace with Rome.

Marbod's attitude marks the beginning of that dualism which has so ominously characterized German history throughout the succeeding centuries. Arminius drew the consequences resulting from Marbod's refusal: he recalled his Cheruscan warriors, who, after the destruction of Varus's legions, had entered the region of the Lippe and carried their victorious arms as far as the Rhine. However reluctantly he abandoned his plan of an attack on the Rhineland, which was entirely divested of Roman garrisons, he could not risk leading his troops across that river so long as Marbod's passively hostile forces kept watch before the Thuringian passes.

Five years elapsed before Rome took steps to avenge her defeat. Tiberius then despatched his nephew Germanicus, son of the great Drusus, against the Cheruscans and their allies. The youthful commander-in-chief adopted his father's plan of campaign, which aimed at encircling the enemy. Advancing upstream along the Rhine, he succeeded in immobilizing his adversary on the Eder and the Lahn; he thence swerved with lightning-like rapidity towards the

North in order to attack—as he hoped, decisively—the Germans in the flank. From his base on the Zuider Zee he pushed forward alike on land and water against the Ems, whilst sending simultaneously forty cohorts under the Legate Cæcina up the Lippe. Although this first campaign of his failed to achieve its object, Germanicus did not lose heart, and took comprehensive measures in view of a renewal of hostilities in the year A.D. 16, counting—not without good reason—on dissensions among the Germanic tribes on the Rhine.

Arminius saw his position shaken. He had committed the error of expecting too much from his people. Roman prestige proved stronger than the Germanic aspiration to liberty. Numerous Germanic nobles entertained friendly relations with Rome. Arminius's father-in-law, Segestes, went over to the Romans and abducted the Cheruscan chief's wife Thusnelda, Segestes's own daughter, whom Segestes conveyed to Rome as a hostage, together with her child. Amidst these terrible difficulties Arminius the Cheruscan rose to the full measure of his greatness. When they saw the most elementary feelings of humanity, the most fundamental human instincts, ruthlessly sacrificed to political calculations of the basest kind, the Germanic tribes understood their duty. They flocked to the standard of Arminius, whom they hailed as their leader and saviour.

The great strategic offensive planned by the Romans did not take Arminius unawares. He knew that neither on the Lippe nor on the Ems, neither at the Osning Pass nor in the Weser Hills, could his troops withstand the powerful concentrated attack threatening him from the source of the Lippe to the Weser's mouth. Under these circumstances all he could do was to retreat in an easterly direction. The Roman forces on the Lippe forced their way through the Osning Pass and advanced on the Weser, whilst the Roman Northern Army, accompanied and assisted by the fleet, reached that river's estuary. Landing on its left bank, Germanicus marched upstream and joined hands at Hamelin with the Army of the Lippe. Thence the combined forces, over 60,000 strong, advanced towards the south, burning and plundering on their way, with the intention of crossing over to the right bank. Arminius now attacked them suddenly and vigorously. For days an incessant running fight continued. When the

power of resistance of the Germanic warriors became exhausted, Arminius cleverly eluded a Roman counter-attack, and withdrew in an easterly direction to the Steinhuder Lake. Although wounded he remained at the head of his troops.

Germanicus followed in pursuit, hoping to force a decisive battle. The encounter on the Weser had cost the Germans heavy losses, but the Romans had nevertheless been unable to gain the upper hand. The determination and fighting-trim of the Germanic tribes remained unimpaired. When Germanicus attacked them on the Steinhuder Lake, they retreated slowly, step by step, in perfect order, thus obliging the Roman leader reluctantly to admit the fact that the battle in the Teutoburg Forest had left indelible traces in the Germanic mind. True, the Romans might devastate Germanic land and defeat Germanic levies; but they could no longer hope to annihilate the Germanic warlike spirit or to destroy the Germanic yearning for liberty.

Recognizing the realities of the situation, Germanicus gave his troops the order to retreat to the Rhine. By means of indiscriminate devastation the Romans sought to spread terror among the inhabitants. Following in the invader's tracks, Arminius continued to harass him until the mouth of the Weser and the Osning Pass were reached. Whilst the Roman Army maintained its positions on the glacis of the Lippe, a sudden storm overtook the likewise retreating Roman fleet and sank half its ships.

In the hope of intimidating the Germans, Germanicus once more took the offensive, and laid waste the Ruhr basin and the valley of the Lenne. But if a certain number of renegades, who feared Rome less than they hated the domination of the Cheruscans, volunteered their submission, the great mass of the tribesfolk held out in inaccessible recesses of virgin forests, until the Romans, weary of strife, withdrew again across the Rhine.

Tiberius now ordered his young nephew to break-off the offensive and return to Rome in order to celebrate his "triumph" in appropriate fashion. Thus did the Emperor endeavour to conceal, in the eyes of his subjects, the extent of the disaster suffered by his imperial policy in northern climes despite a victorious campaign on the Rhine. The Germanic tribes preserved their independence.

But Rome's retreat was of a strategic, rather than a political, nature. If Tiberius decided to abandon the campaign on the Rhine, we may certainly ascribe his decision to political reasons. Knowing the psychology of the Germanics, he also knew that he could reckon on the co-operation of a singularly efficient ally—namely, discord, which has invariably proved to be Germany's most dangerous foe. Subsequent developments showed that he was right in his anticipations. Arminius took the field against Marbod, whose troops he defeated on the Saale, thereby compelling the Marcomanni to retreat to Bohemia. The year 19 of our era thus witnessed the first battle waged by Germans against Germans, and also the first victory of North Germany over South Germany. Marbod's kingship proved unequal to the blow dealt it, and his laboriously constructed authority collapsed like a pack of cards. Internal dissensions and intrigues tore the first Bohemian empire asunder, and Marbod saw himself finally compelled to abdicate and seek shelter in Roman territory. Here he remained, a homeless exile, eking out a cheerless existence on a meagre pension, until his death in Ravenna eighteen years later.

The heroic figure of Arminius stands out, by comparison, the more conspicuously. He had sacrificed wife and child in his undaunted fight for his country's freedom against Roman aggression. But notwithstanding all his efforts and sacrifices, the Cheruscan chief was not destined to witness the completion of his life-work. At the age of thirty-seven he perished in the course of some obscure internal strife, no details of which have reached posterity. But he still survives in the hearts of his countrymen, who have personified him in Siegfried the Dragon Killer, and one of whose proudest and most glorious reminiscences is the battle of the Teutoburg Forest, the legend of which succeeding centuries have unceasingly embellished. Viewed in the light of the greatest figure at the dawn of German history, the struggle for the Rhine—the struggle for German liberty—assumes symbolic importance.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMAN IMPERIUM AND THE BIRTH OF GERMANIC STATES ON THE RHINE

Military organization of the Romans on the Rhine—Rome's dynastic troubles—Claudius Civilis—The dream of an *Imperium Galliarum*—First advance of Germanic tribes beyond their boundaries—Franks and Alemanni—The second “Germanic battle”—Julian the Apostate—Cnodomar's defeat—Julian and the Franks—Julian and the Gauls—Valentinian's campaign against the Germanics—Unbroken progress of the barbarians—Temporary consolidation of Rome's power—Linking-up of Eastern and Western problems—Alaric and the Western Goths—Burgundians, Franks, Alemanni, Vandals—Attila—Retreat of the Huns—Influence of the Hun invasion on the political constellation of the Rhineland—The strategic problem of the Rhine—A Roman survival on the Seine—Clovis—The revival of German dualism—The Merovingian dynasty—Slav migrations—Christian missions in Central Europe—Austrasia and Neustria—Charles Martel—His historic rôle.

WHEN the great Cheruscan died, the Rhine flowed between banks occupied by Roman Armies ; but the Germanics had none the less established, by ineffaceable deeds of heroism, their imprescriptible claim to those banks.

Within the country watered by the Rhine three large regions could be clearly distinguished : the Alpine region, stretching from the river's source to the Jura and to its entry into the Upper Rhenish plain ; a secondary mountain region, embracing the Upper Rhenish plain, the Rheingau, and the river valley as far as the Seven Hills ; and, finally, the Low Country, extending from the confluence of Ruhr and Rhine to the North Sea.

The Rhine-Rhône route constituted the most important strategic line of communication between the Mediterranean and North-West Europe, including Britain. Soleure, Strasbourg, Saverne, Mayence, Treves, Coblenz, Cologne, Xanten, and Nymwegen were the main links in the strategic chain drawn by the Romans throughout the entire length and breadth of the Rhine basin, and which connected Marseilles, not only

with the English Channel, but also with Augsburg. Mayence formed the centre of this admirably conceived organization and the principal base of the Upper Rhenish legions. It was the main connecting-link between Helvetia, the Burgundian Gate, and the Saverne Pass, on the one hand ; and the valley of the Saar and the Lower Rhine, on the other ; and it was practically impregnable. Seated in Germany's flank, Rome controlled her from Mayence after Arminius had shut the invader off from the interior of the country. Thanks to the possession of Mayence, Rome could dominate simultaneously the Upper and Lower Rhine, the Moselle and the Saar, and even distant Britain.

Those Germanic tribes which still retained their independence were quick to seize every favourable opportunity to ambush their enemies. Thus they soon became dangerous for Roman settlers. About the middle of the first century we find war established *en permanence* on the Rhine. We see Rome thrown back on the defensive along the whole length of the river's basin ; on the Lower Rhine she completely lost hold of the right bank and recognized *nolens volens* the river itself as constituting her empire's frontier.

The first decisive blow was then struck, from within, at the skilfully constructed edifice of the Roman *imperium*. The Rhineland was drawn into the vortex of Rome's great dynastic troubles and became the scene of an Empire's internecine struggles. Conflicts commenced between rival candidates for world supremacy, and the Praetorian Guard henceforth decided who should occupy the throne of the Cæsars. After the death of Galba and Otho, at the time when Vitellius and Vespasian are facing each other in a deadly duel, Germanic *condottiere* appear for the first time on the scene of history. A Batavian named Julius Claudius Civilis gave the impulse to their intervention. Having deserted Vitellius and espoused Vespasian's cause, he subsequently stood aside, awaiting an opportunity to found an empire of his own.

Separatist tendencies likewise manifested themselves among the Gauls. The idea of a Gallic *imperium* uniting the Rhenish Germans¹ and the Celts of the Moselle region, rapidly gained ground and threatened to destroy Rome's

¹ Julius Cæsar had defined the Rhine as constituting Gaul's eastern frontier. See p. 21. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

domination. The insurgents, led by Julius Sabinus, captured all the fortresses on the Lower Rhine, stormed Castra Vetera, took Cologne, routed the Roman legions which still remained loyal, advanced upstream, conquered Treves, crossed the Nahe, and appeared victorious before Mayence. The flames of rebellion spread as far as the Alps. Mutinous cohorts massacred tribunes and legates, and laid Roman strongholds in ruins. Only Mayence and Windisch escaped destruction. Treves became the capital of the new empire, and a Senate composed of its burgesses assumed the reins of power.

But at this precise moment the insurgents' leaders modified their original aims. Abandoning the *fata morgana* of a Germano-Gallic *imperium*, Civilis determined to erect on the Rhine a Batavian empire of his own creation. He secured the unanimous support of the Germanic tribes on the Lower Rhine, and the entire region between Meuse and Ems accepted his sway. At this critical juncture Vespasian—who had meanwhile triumphed over Vitellius—despatched his best general, Petilius Cerealis, over the Alps. Civilis retreated to Xanten, where he awaited a battle which proved indecisive. Since, however, the number of his followers constantly decreased in consequence of desertions *en masse*, he withdrew on the third day with the remnants of his forces to the river's delta. Treason thinned his ranks and his lucky star forsook him. Being clever enough to take account of the circumstances, he entered into negotiations with his adversaries in order to prevent a Roman invasion of Batavia. But his rôle was at an end. The attempt to erect in the Lower Rhenish region a Germanic empire on the Roman model had proved a failure.

Yet another dream, that of an *Imperium Galliarum*, was likewise soon destined to vanish. By means of severe repressive measures, Vespasian rapidly succeeded in crushing the insurrection kindled in Gaul by Sabinus. But despite a fearful accumulation of ruins due to that abortive uprising, Gaul soon recovered. Vespasian took measures to ensure more rigid discipline among his troops and to strengthen the conquerors' military position. Domitian followed Vespasian's example; and when the former returned to Rome from the Rhine in 85, he had the satisfaction of knowing that the scheme of a fortified frontier stretching from the Danube to the Lower Rhine had been realized. Since the idea of a universal

imperium dominated men's minds throughout all the ancient Roman provinces, Gaul ceased henceforth to be a subject of anxiety in Rome. As for Britain, having been subdued as far as the Clyde, she also accepted Roman rule and adapted herself to Roman customs.

But if Gallic cohorts no longer constituted a danger, the same could not be said of Rome's Germanic auxiliaries. The development of events led in course of time to the paradoxical result that the "Romanization" of the Rhineland was accompanied by a progressive "barbarization" of the Roman Armies. The legions guarding the Rhine frontier and the troops fighting in Transylvania were alike strongly intermingled with barbarian elements. Germanic tribes found themselves pitted against other Germanic tribes. In 160 the first barbarians violated the frontiers assigned them—namely, the Marcomanni, who crossed the Rhætian border.

Although the advance of the Marcomanni did not directly affect the Rhine basin, Germanic tribes began to cluster in ever-increasing agglomerations on the Rhætian and Germanic boundaries. The waters of the steadily rising flood of Germanic emigrants from beyond the Elbe accumulated in perilous fashion before the gates of the Roman Empire. The Franks appeared on the northern, the Alemanni on the southern, bank of the Main. They appeared at a propitious moment for them. The downfall of Rome's military power was becoming manifest. But despite increasing difficulties of all sorts, the genius of successive Cæsars succeeded in checking any further advance of Germanic tribes during another 150 years. Then the dilapidated dikes gave way.

The Alemanni pushed forward into Rhætia, crossed the Brenner, and penetrated through the plain of the Po into Umbria. The Franks crossed the Rhine and the Meuse, plundered Champagne and the basin of the Seine, and reached Aquitania. Although no ideas of political conquest inspired these purely predatory incursions, settlements arose on the Neckar and in the Black Forest, in Alsace and Helvetia. But at the close of the third century the Emperors Aurelian and Probus succeeded once more in repelling the invaders. The Alemanin were driven back across the Neckar, and the Romans fortified anew the Rhine frontier.

About the middle of the fourth century incursions of

Germanic tribes into those territories situated beyond their borders began to assume a character of systematic political conquest. Alemannic peasants settled in the Upper Rhenish plain and Helvetia, and in 357 the soil of Alsace witnessed a second "Germanic battle."¹ By defeating Ariovistus and thereby transforming Alsace into a Roman glacis, Julius Cæsar had retarded the Germanic advance by 400 years. Fate reserved for Julian, now Viceroy of Gaul and subsequently known as "the Apostate," the task of struggling with the Alemanni for possession of this flourishing Roman colony. The Alemanni concentrated their forces before Strasbourg, and elected their oldest and most distinguished warrior, Cnodomar, as king. They lacked all connection with the Franks, who were simultaneously making headway on the Lower Rhine, and taking advantage of Julian's hands being tied on the Upper Rhine to found the first great Frankish settlements between the Lower Rhine, the Moselle, and the Meuse.

When they confronted Julian's legions, Cnodomar's forces did not exceed 10,000 men. The Romans' numerical superiority carried the day, and Cnodomar himself surrendered to the victor. Transported to Rome, he died before arriving there. Thus a second time did the Romans fling their Germanic adversaries back beyond the Rhine; but this time also Germanic settlers remained on the river's left bank.

News of the defeat of the Alemanni reached the Franks in the midst of their victorious advance in the Low Country. Having crossed the Meuse, they expanded freely between the latter river, the Scheldt, and the Sambre, and were fast taking root in this fertile region. Not feeling strong enough to expel them, Julian offered them peace on condition that, in exchange for the authorization to remain on their newly acquired land, they should accept service in the Roman Army. Having concluded this agreement, Julian returned to the Seine.

After the battle of Strasbourg the Alemanni withdrew to the eastern side of the Black Forest; but they by no means renounced their intention of returning. If Julian succeeded in restoring the old frontier again, he was actuated not so much by considerations of Roman policy as by political motives having their origin on the Seine, where the ruler of

¹ See p. 18. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

Gaul resided. Here a tendency already clearly showed itself of opposing to each other the Romanized West and the Germanic East. After 357 Julian acted as *Imperator Galliarum*, adopting the traditional Cæsarian doctrine of Gaul's right to the Rhine and of Rome's privileged position on that river, from which he excluded the eastern Germanic tribes.

Lutetia Parisiorum, Julian's residence on the Seine, became the centre of importance, and the Marne began to take precedence of the Rhône as a strategic factor. When, in 361, a unanimous proclamation alike of his own troops and of the Germanic mercenaries raised Julian to the rank of Roman Emperor, he adopted, not the Roman, but the ancient Celtic, insignia of sovereign authority. The idea of the creation of a new State doubtless inspired this symbolic action. But it was an ephemeral idea, a passing flash of lightning; for the time had not yet come for erecting a Gallic empire having its centre on the Seine. The Romanized Celts of Gaul needed an infusion of Germanic blood, required to be invigorated by an intermingling with their eastern Germanic neighbours, before being able to evolve an independent political State of their own.

Having been proclaimed successor of Augustus, Julian left Gaul for Rome. When he died, two years later, in the course of a campaign against the Parthians, the Alemanni were again ready to break the bounds assigned them. They overflowed into the plateau of Lorraine, crossed the Argonnes, and devastated Champagne. The Emperor Valentinian despatched Jovinus, his most capable general, to arrest their progress. Jovinus fulfilled his mission, whereupon Valentinian travelled to Paris to celebrate his triumph and proclaimed his son Gratian, amidst the applause of the legions, successor of Augustus. This politically momentous action gave outward and visible expression to the transfer of the Western centre of gravity to Paris. The latter henceforth became the nucleus of neo-Roman world power.

Valentinian, however, not content with this achievement, made preparations for a campaign on a truly Cæsarian scale against the rebellious Germanics. Three Armies took the field. Crossing the Rhine between Mayence and Strasbourg, Valentinian entered Upper Germany through the gates of the Neckar and the Main. But his success was short-lived.

Compelled to beat a hasty retreat, the Emperor withdrew behind the Odenwald.

The reconquest of the Neckar and the capture of Mayence by the Alemanni dealt a blow at Rome's prestige from which she never recovered. In his distress Valentinian appealed to the Franks for help, and summoned the Roman garrisons of Britain and Illyria to the Rhine, in the hope of damming the onflowing tide of barbarians which surged from the Alps to the North Sea and threatened to submerge the entire Rhine basin. The Alemanni, for their part, set about to conquer Lorraine. At the same time another Germanic people, the Saxons, made their appearance in Batavia and carried their daring enterprise as far as the shores of Britain. The entire Gallo-Roman empire appeared shaken to its very foundations. Valentinian defended himself with the energy of despair; and thanks to the support of his Frankish auxiliaries, who saw themselves menaced by the preponderance of the Alemanni and Saxons, he again succeeded in holding his adversaries back on the Rhine.

At this moment a new Germanic tribe, that of the Burgundians, emerged from obscurity to throw its weight into the balance in the struggle for the Rhine. The Burgundians, who had hitherto sat on the banks of the Warthe, arrived in the course of their roamings at the Rhine, eager to find a fertile soil whereon to settle. Valentinian would not consent to cede them the Palatinate, which they coveted, but he raised no objection to their settling in the Spessart and the Odenwald, where they inevitably collided with the Alemanni, much to Rome's advantage.

Valentinian, incontestably a master of the art of war, died in 375 during a campaign on the Danube, leaving to his son Gratian the doubtful legacy of Rome's Imperial Throne. Internal dissensions among the Germanic tribes temporarily consolidated Rome's supremacy on the Rhine's banks, and Treves became the Emperor's residence. When, in 378, Goths overran the Byzantine dominions and Gratian prepared to come to his uncle Valens's assistance, Alemanni took advantage of this opportunity to cross the Upper Rhine again. Breaking through the Black Forest Passes, these redoubtable warriors appeared in the Alsatian plain, where, however, they encountered troops prudently left behind by Gratian

to garrison the country, the result being a severe defeat of the invaders near Colmar. The Alemanni retreated beyond the Rhine. Gratian followed them as far as the Black Forest, but then broke off the pursuit in order to rush to his uncle's assistance in the East. But he came too late. Valens and his Army had been hopelessly beaten by the Goths near Adrianople, and Gothic horsemen appeared menacingly before the walls of Constantinople. Rome passed through some of the darkest days of her destiny. The unexpected offensive of the Alemanni had wrecked the strategic plans of both Emperors ; the former's defeat proved a misfortune for the Romans, since it delayed Gratian's advance and thus saved the Goths from a flanking attack.

In 378 it looked as though the Germanic world were simultaneously struggling, on the Rhine and the Bosphorus, for mastery of the western and eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire respectively. For the first time in history the two problems—those of the Rhine and the Golden Horn—appear linked-up with each other. And in 401 the catastrophe dawned.

Stilico, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Emperor Honorius, saw himself compelled to summon all available troops to Upper Italy, in order to face the West Gothic hordes under Alaric. Stilico concluded treaties with the Franks and the Alemanni, the object of which was to safeguard Gaul. Having done so, he united his forces against Alaric, whom he thrust back into Illyria. But Stilico, a man of Vandal birth, became, despite his energy, suspicious to Roman patriots of the old pattern, who accused him of treasonable negotiations with Alaric. These accusations, however unfounded they may have been, produced their effect among the General's mutinous legions. In 408 his troops assassinated him, whereupon the irresistible tide of Germanic invaders broke down all the dikes hitherto opposed to it.

Alaric overran Italy and captured Rome. Suevi and Vandals crossed the Rhine. Burgundians seized the opportunity to settle in the region around Speyer—but they did not come to till the soil, they came as warriors, and contented themselves with the *rôle* of usufructuaries. This proved their undoing, for they failed to take root on the banks of the Rhine.

The roots taken by Franks and Alemanni were all the deeper. But the rapidly swelling tide of migrating peoples soon submerged the European continent and devastated the wealthy empire. After Alaric's death the Western Goths left Italy and migrated to South Gaul, which they conquered from the mouth of the Rhône to the mouth of the Garonne. Spain fell into the hands of roving Germanic tribes. Vandals crossed the Mediterranean and appeared on the coast of Mauretania.

At this critical juncture Valentinian III had the good fortune to find in Aetius, a semi-barbarian from Siliстria, the last really great general born to the Roman Empire. Aetius drove the Western Goths from the Rhône, thereby saving the empire's communications with the Rhine. Having accomplished this, he opened a campaign against the Salic Franks, who occupied the district of the Scheldt, and reduced them to submission. He then succeeded in suppressing a peasants' uprising, which had spread over the length and breadth of Gaul. Africa was meanwhile lost to Rome, but the salvation of Gaul appeared an adequate compensation.

Fate now overtook the Burgundians. Allied with Hun freebooters, Aetius turned on them with savage fury to take vengeance for their hostility to Valentinian III. This combined attack sealed the fate of the small and isolated kingdom of Gundicar, whose subjects saw themselves compelled to capitulate in 436 after a heroic resistance. The German people have immortalized the downfall of the Burgundians in the undying strophes of the *Nibelungenlied*.

But if the struggle for the Rhine proved disastrous to the Burgundians, it did not annihilate them. In the region to which they have given their name for all time, they founded a flourishing empire. Through the gap left open by them on the Rhine, however, the Hun war-lord Attila appeared only a few years later and imperiously demanded the right of entry into Roman territory. For the erstwhile alliance between Aetius and Attila had been transformed into deadly enmity. East rose against West, and the former carried everything before it. Behind Attila the towns of the Palatinate and the Moselle region lay in ruins, their churches and dwelling-houses reduced to ashes, their menfolk massacred, their womenfolk forcibly carried-off by the barbarous invaders from Asia's

boundless steppes. Crossing the Saar, the Huns stormed Metz, arrived at the Meuse, overran defenceless Champagne. Having no armed force at their disposal, the Christian towns of Gaul prayed for divine assistance and resolved to defend themselves as best they could *in signo crucis*. Repulsed before the walls of Troyes, Soissons, and Orleans, Attila's hordes ravaged the entire countryside until not a blade of grass grew under the hoofs of their horses. It seemed as though the end of the world were nigh.

But help came at last. Attila stood before Orleans, intending to break into the fertile land of the Western Goths which stretched from the mouth of the Rhône to that of the Garonne. Here an Army composed of Romans, Western Goths, and Franks, led by Aetius, undertook in the name of Christendom and civilization to bar the way to the Asiatic hordes. Out-maneuvred by his opponents, Attila withdrew across the Seine and did not offer battle till he reached the plains of Champagne. Aetius took advantage of this delay to summon Burgundian, Alemannic and Frankish auxiliaries to his aid. Determined to bring the campaign to a close by a single stroke, Attila sought a decision in the Catalaunian Plain. We possess no authentic record of the great "battle of peoples" which took place in Champagne in 451. But in any case it is certain that Attila found himself obliged to retreat, thereby abandoning the campaign. The Asiatic tide receded across the Rhine. Western Europe was saved.

Although the battle on the Catalaunian Plain took place outside the Rhine basin, it was destined to have fundamental importance for the latter, one of its results being to definitely incorporate the Rhineland in that system of Germanic States which arose from out of the gigantic ruins of the Roman Empire.

The struggle for the Rhine now becomes a struggle between Germanic tribes for supremacy on that river's left bank. Romans and Celts no longer participate in the fight for preponderance on the Rhine, which flows henceforth through Germanic territory from source to mouth. The struggle between Rome and Germania for mastery of the Rhine, after lasting five centuries, had been decided in favour of the Germanics.

Of the strategic problems confronting us on the Rhine in

later times, there is not a single one we do not find already posed at that date. The explanation should not be sought in the great variety of the military tasks facing Romans, Celts, and Germans respectively, but in the fact that the entire Rhine basin forms a *natural unit*, and that the Rhine can under no circumstances be regarded either as a political or as a strategic frontier.

Even Julius Cæsar, who arbitrarily declared the Rhine to constitute Gaul's eastern boundary, could not escape the workings of this immutable law of the river-basin's unity. Having embarked on the conquest of Gaul in 58 B.C., recognized the strategic importance of the Rhine-Rhône line, destroyed the kingdom of Ariovistus on the Upper Rhine and in the Jura, and subdued the Germanic tribes on the Lower Rhine; Cæsar discovered that even if he could thereby threaten Gaul in the flank and assure his line of communications with Great Britain, he was unable to dominate the Rhine itself unless he took possession of its right bank. He owed his victory over the Gauls to the fact that he linked-up the great strategic routes of the Rhône and the Rhine; it was not from the Rhine, however, it was from the Côte d'Or, that he controlled Gaul. But only by a simultaneous occupation of both banks did he succeed in subjugating the Germanic inhabitants of the Rhine region.

On the day when Rome, after centuries of embittered warfare, abandoned the game and left Western Europe to be divided-up between Germanic peoples, the Rhine ceased to be a mere political dependency of the Cæsars. But the river's strategic importance remained undiminished. For if the struggle between South and North had been decided in the latter's favour, the tussle between West and East now began. Franks, Goths, Burgundians, Alemanni and Saxons sought to fill up, so to speak, the space left vacant by Rome. The Hun storm from the East having been weathered and the last Roman patriciate in the basin of the Seine having been suppressed in 483, all ensuing conflicts in the Western world were exclusively between Germanic tribes which had reached the status of nations.

The Rhine no longer constituted a strategic frontier between the belligerents, but its numerous tributaries—Moselle, Nahe, Queich, Lauter—formed so many natural barriers

separating them. The Franks pushed southwards and the Alemanni northwards ; behind the Alemanni were Bavarians, who, yielding to the pressure of Slav masses, strove upstream along the Danube from Bohemia ; whilst Langobards, advancing southwards, appeared in the Bavarians' flank.

North of the Alps, Roman power in the basin of the Seine was the sole opponent left to this greatly divided Germanic world. In the Gauls' ancestral country, encompassed by mountains and rivers, Roman determination and tenacity—in a word, Roman strength—still lay embedded, and remained ready to defend the only pagan relics of a Christianized empire. Since the latter's western half had already been absorbed by the Germanic world, this last surviving remnant sought to protect itself by leaning for support on Byzantium. Syagrius, who commanded Rome's forces on the Seine, demanded and obtained from the Byzantine Emperor, Zeno, permission to adopt the style of *Rex Romanorum*, with the object of proving the legitimacy of his claims and impressing the Franks thereby. But the latter were not to be checked by such devices. Simultaneously with the Alemanni they emerged from the plain of the Scheldt and the Sambre Hills, advancing southwards.

Syagrius defended a lost cause. In 481 Clovis, King of the Salic Franks, crossed the Oise, drove him over the Marne, defeated him at Orleans, and thereby annihilated what still survived of the neo-Roman State in Gaul. Even the last shadow of erstwhile Roman greatness in this part of the world finally disappeared when Clovis, four years later, pushed forward from Tournai to Soissons. The Franks now settled on the Loire, next to the Western Goths and the Burgundians. Clovis himself wedded the Burgundian Princess Clothilde, who had been baptized. He then turned his attention to the Alemanni.

German dualism underwent its second historic transformation. Whereas in former days Arminius and Marbod had borne witness to it on the Saale, Franks and Alemanni now transferred that dualism to the Rhine.

At the head of a numerous Army, composed partly of Germans and partly of Gallo-Romans, Clovis appeared on the Lower Rhine, where he thrust back his Alemannic adversaries towards the South. According to a legend,

Clovis swore that he would allow himself to be baptized if he gained the victory. This legend proves, not merely how difficult the struggle must have been, but also the immense influence exerted by the Franks on the reorganization of the Germanic world within the pale of the Catholic Church.

The Alemanni retreated over the Lauter and abandoned Alsace; in 500 they were repulsed as far as the Neckar. Parts of the Alemannic tribes were driven into the dominions of Theodoric the Great, King of the Eastern Goths, who, stretching his powerful hand across the Alps, extended hospitality to these brave Germanic peasants in the Allgäu and Rhætia, and stayed Clovis's pursuit on the Lake of Constance.

Thanks to their victory over the Alemanni, the Franks obtained control of the Rhine. During 200 years the Merovingian dynasty, founded by Clovis, governed a territory stretching from the Loire to the Thuringian Forest. Quarrels among Clovis's heirs produced the result of dividing his heritage into two parts, Austrasia and Neustria.¹ But no epoch-making developments marked this era of dreary intestine struggles until about A.D. 600, when a new tidal wave of migration swept from East to West. This movement originated in Bohemia, and its first result was to drive out the Germanic settlers in that region, where they had lived since Marbod's time. The Slavs pushed forward as far as the Bohemian Forest. Under these circumstances the historic *rôle* devolved on the Western Germanic tribes of defending Christian civilization. They worthily fulfilled it. Saxons valiantly stood their ground between Elbe and Rhine, north of the Main; Thuringians fought with the bravery begotten of despair around the source of the Saale; Franks, Bavarians, and Alemanni held their own south of the Main, between the Bohemian Forest and the Alps.

In consequence of the Bavarians withdrawing beyond the natural rampart afforded them by the Bohemian Forest—an exodus destined to have fatal results for the Germans in times

¹ Austrasia, *Francia orientalis*, consisted (from the death of Clovis in 511 to that of Pépin le Bref in 768) of Auvergne, Burgundy, Lorraine, Belgium, and other Frankish territory extending eastwards as far as the Thuringian Forest, and had as its capital Metz. Neustria, *Francia occidentalis*, formed that part of France bounded in the North-West by Brittany, in the South by Aquitania, in the East by Burgundy; Paris, Soissons, Orleans, and Tours were the chief towns of this kingdom, which in the North-East did not stretch beyond the Meuse. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

to come—a Slav power established itself between the Riesengebirge and the aforesaid mountain-chain. It did not last long before the victorious Slavs advanced upstream along the Main towards the Rhine. In view of their common peril, the German tribes forgot their mutual quarrels; all united against the deadly foe. Neither side gave any quarter to its adversaries in a struggle in which two enemy races stood pitted against each other in mortal combat—Germans fighting for their very existence, Slavs for exclusive possession of German soil. Little by little, after protracted and heroic efforts, the Slav hordes were pushed back towards Bohemia.

The Franks had been Christianized, whereas the Slavs were still pagans. It was, therefore, only natural that the Catholic Church should emerge as a powerful factor in this life-and-death struggle. The Church sent her missionaries into the countries east of the Rhine, her intention being to convert Alemanni and Saxons and thus to consolidate Western civilization *in signo crucis*. The era dawned of the great missionary enterprises associated with the names of Irish monks. The silhouettes of Gallus, Columban, Boniface, appear on the stage of history. Monasteries were erected, in which the entire spiritual life of the times, such as it was, found itself concentrated—in Switzerland, Northern Italy, Swabia, Alsace, and the Rhineland. Classical culture discovered an asylum in the Church, whilst the Church developed the feeling of solidarity among the Austrasians.

The latter's struggle against the Slavs enabled them to proclaim their independence and set up their own King in 660. This prevented the unification of the Frankish empire, consequently also the absorption of Austrasia by Neustria. The Rhineland thus maintained its autonomous political position, until Pépin d'Herstal put an end to the seemingly unending intestine conflicts and transferred once more the Western world's centre of gravity from the Rhine to the Moselle.

In 687 the same Pépin declared war on Neustria and appeared on the banks of the Oise at the head of an Austrasian army. When Pépin died in 714, he bore the title of "Duke of the Franks." History does not record whether his rule extended from the Lower Rhine to the Meuse, but in any case it must have had its roots in the Rhine itself.

Pépin's illegitimate son, Charles Martel, although only Mayor of the Palace of Pépin's grandson and successor Theobald, soon found means and ways to assert himself. History has given him an immortal surname as vanquisher of the Arabs. But his victory at Tours in 732 did not only signify the triumph of Western Christendom over the infidel ; it also entailed his personal supremacy over the entire Frankish empire. He utilized his campaign against the Saracens to shape Frankish policy, and to secure the Rhineland—his own home and source of Frankish strength—against Frisian and Saxon attacks. Nominally Charles Martel ranked merely as Mayor of the Palace ; in reality he held together in his iron grasp the entire Frankish empire founded by Clovis two centuries previously, and his power—securely anchored in the Rhine, and extending from the Weser to the Garonne and from the North Sea to the Mediterranean—was felt equally by Saracens and Burgundians, Frisians and Saxons. When Theodoric, the titular King of the Franks, died in 737, Charles Martel found himself sufficiently strong to dispense with the services of a nominal successor to that monarch.

But Destiny had ordained that his cup of sweetness should be mingled with gall. Pope Gregory III, at the demand of the Duke of Bavaria, created four Bavarian bishoprics without consulting the supreme Commander of all the Franks. The Papal See thus granted an ecclesiastical privilege to the Bavarians which has survived up to the present day ; the result being to sever Bavaria's political development from that of the Frankish empire, whilst imposing on the former extraordinary duties as an exposed German outpost in the national struggle against Slavs and Magyars. Hence Nature and politics concurred, by a strange blending of their often heterogeneous forces, in designating Bavaria, in the eighth century of the Christian era, as protector of the Rhine against aggressions from the East.

With the death of Charles Martel in 741, by far the finest figure in Frankish history of that period vanishes from the scene. With him disappeared not only the greatest Frank of his time, but also the most remarkable personage produced by the Western Germanic world since Arminius the Cheruscan.

If his sons Carlmann and Pépin inherited their father's

rare intellectual gifts, if his grandson Charlemagne became the greatest monarch the Western world had been privileged to know since the days of Augustus—none of them possessed his unrivalled strength and indomitable resolution. Historically speaking, Charles Martel's giant figure constitutes a landmark—it represents the end of the early semi-conscious struggle of Germanic tribes for political self-assertion and the beginning of the conscious struggle of a German nation for political independence. Amidst the numerous wars which Charles Martel waged in defence of Christendom or for the conquest of Southern France, he never for a single minute lost sight of the importance of the Rhineland for Germany. And he gave the best proof of his foresight by driving the foundations of his Frankish empire so deep into the Rhine that henceforth all possibility of an incorporation of Austrasia in Neustria was precluded.

Charles Martel was not less a protagonist of Germanic culture on the Rhine than Christendom's principal champion in Western Europe.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE RISE OF THE CAROLINGIANS TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE HOHENSTAUFENS

Charles Martel and the destiny of the migrating Germanic peoples—The partition of Charles Martel's dominions—Charlemagne and the Franks—Charlemagne's victory over the Saxons—Charlemagne's coronation by the Pope—Destitution of the Empire at his death—Treaty of Verdun—Destruction of the unity of the Rhine basin—Treaty of Mersen—Conclusion of the first millennium of the struggle for the Rhine—Feuds between the eastern and western halves of the Carolingian Empire—Battle of Andernach—Lotharingia—Otto the Great—Foundation of the Holy Roman Empire—Accession of the House of Capet in France—England's entry into European politics—Anglo-French dynastic quarrels—Battle of Bouvines—Far-reaching consequences of this battle.

WHEN Charles Martel died, those warring East Germanic tribes which, having uprooted themselves from their native soil, spread in all directions, founding ephemeral empires in Italy, Southern France, Spain, and Northern Africa, had ceased to exist. With the single exception of the Langobards, who emigrated from the Danube to the plain of the Po, where they settled, no migratory Germanic people ruled on Romanic soil; what remained of such peoples had been completely Romanized.

As we already said in the last chapter, Charles Martel fully realized the fundamental importance of the Rhine for his Frankish empire. When he died, the Franks absolutely controlled the strategic line of the Rhône and Rhine. Even in the days of Augustus, the Romans themselves had not enjoyed greater security on the Rhine than did the Franks under Charles Martel.

Charles Martel bequeathed his dominions to his sons Carlmann and Pépin. The former inherited Austrasia; the latter Neustria, including Aquitania and Burgundy. This partition put an end to the unity of the Frankish empire and destroyed the equilibrium established in Europe between the

latter, Byzantium, and the Caliphate. Had Carlmann and Pépin not respected their mutual engagements and placed the empire's safety above their own egotistical interests, an incalculable disaster would have ensued, and the collapse of Germanic power been more rapid than its rise.

When Carlmann retired into a monastery in 747, Charles Martel's empire reverted into a single hand. The wary and sagacious Pépin thus became uncontested master of the whole. But not in his capacity as a Germanic Warrior King did he place the crown on his head ; he sought instead Papal consecration, and only took the decisive step after obtaining Rome's consent. It was under these conditions that his proclamation as King of the Franks ensued in 751. This not only implied the first important concession made by Frankish rulers to the Papacy, but also the assumption by the new Carolingian dynasty of rights hitherto invested in the Merovingians. Pépin undertook to defend the Empire and further the cause of Catholicism. Hence Frankish policy became more intimately associated than heretofore with the policy of the Church ; and this proved fatal to the friendship between Franks and Langobards—a friendship assiduously cultivated by Charles Martel. Henceforth German history becomes interwoven with the history of Catholicism, and the struggle for the Rhine is overshadowed by the momentous conflict between Germanic ambitions on the one hand, and ecclesiastical aspirations on the other.

Pépin provided in his last will and testament that the Frankish Empire be divided into equal parts among his two sons Charles and Carlmann, and for this purpose decreed its breaking-up into a northern and a southern half. Charles received the Rhine basin, Belgium, and all land on the Lower and Middle Rhine as far as the Alemannic frontier ; Carlmann inherited Aquitania, Provence, Burgundy, and Alemannia. This unnatural division destroyed the unity of the Rhine basin. The reasons which determined it can only be surmised ; but in any case Carlmann's early death fortunately put a rapid end to what must otherwise have proved a most untoward experience.

In 771, three years after Pépin's demise, Charles thus became sole ruler of all the Franks. He now began to reap the great harvest sown by his father and grandfather. The Frankish

Empire extended its boundaries from the Rhine to the Elbe, expanded upstream along the Danube beyond Vienna, crossed the Pyrenees and the Alps, conquered the Ebro and the Po. Charlemagne's Occidental Empire loomed on the horizon.

The struggle for the Rhine broke out afresh, whereby Charlemagne's genius imparted a new shape to identical aims formerly pursued by Cæsar. The latter's object had been to establish the Roman Empire's frontiers on the Elbe; Charlemagne now sought to open out for the Frankish Empire a route to the East. If Rome wished to compel the Germanic tribes on the Weser to accept foreign domination, Charlemagne determined to bring them by force within his sphere of power. The difference lay in the fact that, whereas Rome's advance constituted a foreign encroachment on Germanic soil, Charlemagne's forward policy resulted in an enrichment of the Germanic world by the incorporation in his Empire of Germanic tribes which had hitherto stood aloof. To obtain this result he paid a high price. In two short campaigns he destroyed the Langobardian Empire. He subjugated Bavaria by proclaiming himself her Duke, expelled the Byzantine Romans from Illyria, made war with varying success on the Spanish Saracens, and fought the heirs of Arminius during thirty years for possession of the Osning Passes and the Weser country.

Not until 783 was this last desperate struggle finally decided on the Wittefeld in Charlemagne's favour. Despite immense numerical superiority Rome had failed to annex Lower Germany, which now fell into Charlemagne's hands. Charlemagne thus definitely withdrew the Rhine from East Germany's sphere of influence and made it the central waterway of the Frankish Empire.

Despite their defeat on the Wittefeld, the Saxons, it is true, still continued for some years to offer an obstinate resistance, but Charlemagne broke their strength and they lost their ancient religious beliefs. Their King, Widukind, embraced Christianity in 785 and laid down his sword. Charlemagne subjugated the land as far as the Eider, finally even summoning Slavs to aid him in crushing the last remnants of insurrection, and settled thousands of Saxons in the Upper Rhenish plain to make sure that their allegiance was not a vain word.

Charlemagne waged his war against the Saxons as part

of a vast political design. In the course of thirty years he waved his sword in all directions, facing simultaneously Langobards, Saracens, Saxons, Byzantines, and Slavs; and he emerged triumphant from this colossal struggle. But Charlemagne, like Napoleon, was very far indeed from being a mere warrior, and both these supermen possessed in a rare degree the gift of constructive statesmanship. When, on Christmas Day, 800, the Pope placed in St. Peter's the Imperial Crown on Charlemagne's head, thereby giving outward and visible expression to the Holy See's gratitude for the secular arm's invaluable protection, this symbolic act not only consecrated the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal power, but marked the conclusion of a process of unification of the Western world in a Roman-German *imperium*.

The struggle for the Rhine seemed to have come to an end. Its basin lay, strategically and politically safeguarded, within the new Empire. Its most vulnerable spot, at the confluence of Lippe and Ruhr, had been secured owing to the pushing forward of the Empire's frontier in an easterly direction. The Rhine itself became the main waterway in the North, and, together with the Rhône, formed the Empire's rotation axis. On its banks and those of its tributaries lay the finest bishoprics and the proudest imperial strongholds. Aix - la - Chapelle became Charlemagne's favourite abode. And here the great monarch, at the zenith of his power, breathed his last on January 28th, 814.

Charlemagne's death left his Empire destitute. True, since he had only one son, the danger of a partition of the Rhine basin did not arise until the second generation. But Louis le Débonnaire had none the less to struggle during his whole reign with his own sons Lothario, Louis, and Charles, who finally proved victorious in this conflict. When, after their father's death in 840, the three sons commenced to quarrel among themselves, the world empire erected by Charlemagne's genius fell to pieces. The historic development resulting from its partition did not change the fundamental nature of the struggle for the Rhine. The problem at issue remained that of the river basin's unity, of its control by a single Power—in other words, whether the Rhine should belong to the Germanic or the Romanic world.

With Charlemagne's death the Frankish Empire ceased to

exist. On August 11th, 843, his grandsons signed at Verdun the celebrated treaty which divided his Empire into three parts. The object of this agreement was to assure each brother, as far as possible, an equal share of the heritage by ceding to each a politically, linguistically, and administratively homogeneous territory. But it failed to accomplish this purpose in regard to Lothario, to whom it left an intermediate kingdom conforming to none of these desiderata ; and the assumption by Lothario of the Imperial Crown could not compensate him for the lack of a properly rounded-off domain. Under such circumstances the Imperial Crown necessarily became, as far as he personally was concerned, a mere incorporeal shadow, since its prestige depended on the might of the Frankish Empire.

A reorganization of its component Romanic and Germanic parts followed the dissolution of Charlemagne's anational, universal monarchy at Verdun. This treaty gave Charles the Bald (i) all land west of the Upper Meuse and the Scheldt, and (ii) Burgundy west of the Saône ; whilst Louis the German received (i) all land on the right bank of the Rhine, and (ii) on the left bank the Alemannic territories of Rhætia, Thurgovia, and Argovia, and the rich viticultural districts around Worms, Speyer, and Mayence. Friesland as far as the mouth of the Weser, the region between Scheldt and Lower Rhine, the Moselle country, Alsace as far as the Meuse, Burgundy east of the Saône, and Italy were ceded to Lothario, who thus came into possession of Rome, Aix-la-Chapelle, and the Rhône, but whose dominions lacked alike natural boundaries and racial homogeneity.

The Treaty of Verdun arbitrarily destroyed the Rhine basin's unity. Lothario soon recognized that he could not retain adequate control over the whole of his artificially delimited territories. He therefore ceded Italy to his eldest son Louis II, and a few years later divided his Burgundian and Rhenish possessions among his two other sons. Of these, Lothario II received Friesland and the left bank of the Rhine ; whilst Charles, the younger son, obtained Burgundy, with the Saône region, and Provence. The ruler of Italy inherited the Imperial Crown. This division of property completed the downfall of the centralized Frankish Empire. It severed the links uniting Rhine and Rhône, and threatened to dissolve

politically the entire Rhine basin. But the extinction of the Lotharingian dynasty prevented this last catastrophe. Lothario senior died in 855, Charles in 863, Lothario II in 869. Emperor Louis II, estranged from his Frankish home, continued to reign in Italy until death overtook him also in 875.

After Lothario II's death, his uncles, Charles the Bald and Louis the German, found themselves confronted by the task of dividing his heritage. In order to unite his ancestral domain with Neustria, Charles the Bald immediately laid hands on Lotharingia, but withdrew when confronted by his brother's menacing attitude. On August 8th, 870, the two brothers concluded a treaty at Mersen, on the Meuse, the effect of which was to partition Charlemagne's Empire into two halves. The dividing line ran from the estuary of the Meuse to the Lake of Geneva. Charles the Bald obtained all land between Meuse and Scheldt, and also Lower Burgundy; Louis the German received Friesland, Holland, the land between (i) Meuse and Lower Rhine, (ii) Moselle and Middle Rhine; further Alsace, Upper Burgundy, and Switzerland. This agreement safeguarded the Rhine basin's political unity and gave the greater part of the left bank, on which the German tongue dominated, to Germany. But it failed to satisfy entirely either partner.

By the Treaty of Mersen the Rhine forfeited the central position which it occupied under Charlemagne, and became part of Germany's western frontier. Germany's interests, however, were directed towards the East. King Louis the German resided in Regensburg, where he kept guard over Bavaria, the rest of Germany, and the Rhine, and whence he sought to ward off Slav and Magyar attacks. By so doing the Eastern Reich fought—on the Elbe, in the Bohemian Forest, on the Danube—not only on its own and the Rhine's behalf, but likewise for Charles the Bald's Western Reich, the existence of which was infinitely less menaced.

The conclusion of the Treaty of Mersen between Charles the Bald and Louis the German marks the end of the first millennium of the historic struggle for the Rhine.

When Emperor Louis II, Lothario I's last surviving son, died in 875, Charles the Bald, ignoring his elder brother's priority of claim, stretched out his hand towards Italy and the Imperial Crown. He found the Pope willing to crown him

in exchange for the sacrifice of certain sovereign rights—a concession which Charles readily granted. Thirsting for vengeance, Louis the German invaded Champagne; but he died in 876, leaving to his three sons, Carlmann, Louis, and Charles, the task of carrying on the struggle.

Charles the Bald returned in triumph from Rome and at once proceeded to make preparations for conquering the Rhine. Assembling his vassals at Soissons, he crossed the Scheldt and the Meuse, traversed the Ardennes, occupied Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne, and advanced upstream to capture Mayence, Worms, and Speyer. Louis III, Louis the German's second son, undertook the river's defence. A bloody battle ensued on October 8th, 876, before the gates of Andernach, which saved the Rhine and the Moselle for Germany. Andernach was the first encounter between the Eastern and Western halves of the erstwhile united Carolingian Empire for possession of the Rhine. Hence it constitutes a momentous date in history. As the reward of his victory Louis III received Metz and Lotharingia.

But in other respects also Charles the Bald paid dearly for his defeat at Andernach. It seemed as if his luck had definitely forsaken him. A second expedition to Rome failed to protect Italy and the Patrimonium Petri from being overrun by plundering Saracenic hordes. And, to add to his mortification, Charles saw his nephew Carlmann snatch away the coveted Imperial Crown. Shortly afterwards Charles the Bald died, a broken man. To the superstitious, his death might have appeared as a signal for the outbreak of an epidemic of mortality among the Carolingians in both East and West. Within ten years no fewer than seven were carried to their graves, the result being to gravely disturb the stability of either Reich.

The Western Reich broke up into a number of autonomous parts. Upper and Lower Burgundy became independent kingdoms, Normans conquered the Atlantic coast, and were only beaten back under the walls of Paris. In Italy native-born princes fought for the Carolingian heritage and the Imperial Crown. In the Eastern Reich the common Germanic tongue and tradition came to be recognized as a binding link by those peoples—Saxons, Alemanni, Franks, Thuringians, and Bavarians—which Charlemagne's strong hand had welded

together. They elected Arnulf of Carinthia, Carlmann's illegitimate son, as King.

Charles the Simple, King of France, Charles the Bald's grandson, invited by notables of the land, invaded Lotharingia, renewing his grandfather's policy. But his triumph proved short-lived.

Yet although Lotharingia remained in German hands, her magnates refused, on the death of Louis the Child, Arnulf's son, in 910, to take part in the choice of a successor; and the rich Lotharingian heritage remained a bone of contention between West and East. Whilst continuing to adhere to the Eastern Carolingians, Lotharingia now elected its own Duke in the person of Count Reginar of Hainaut.

In 939 Otto, son of Henry I of Germany, came to the assistance of Charles the Simple's son, Louis IV of France, whose throne was seriously endangered by one of the latter's powerful vassals. In return for this timely assistance, Louis IV solemnly agreed to abandon all claim to Lotharingia.

During the sixty years which elapsed between the battle of Andernach and the accession of Otto the Great, unceasing feuds between Eastern and Western Carolingians, disastrous incursions of Norman freebooters, Slav wars, Hungarian invasions, repeated divisions of Charlemagne's heritage, rent Europe asunder. In 954 the wild Magyars again overran Germany's frontiers and poured into the Rhenish Low Country. Here, in the following year, King Otto decisively routed them on the Sechfeld. In consequence of this victory Otto ascended the Imperial Throne, and in 962 he created the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations.¹

The Holy Roman Empire, ignoring geographical difficulties, transferred Germany's centre of gravity from the Rhine to Italy. Conformably with this fundamental change of policy we find German history during the next three centuries revolving around a double axis, namely, the Empire's strife

¹ Charlemagne, who resuscitated in 800 the title and dignity of Roman Emperor, which had been in abeyance since the deposition of Romulus Augustulus by Odoaker in 476, united the Imperial, French, and German Crowns. But since the Treaty of Verdun in 843 the three titles remained separated, each having its own holder, until Otto the Great brought about the permanent fusion of the Imperial and German Crowns, the two of them being merged in each other. This state of affairs lasted till 1806, when Napoleon put an end to the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations, (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

with the Papacy on the one hand, and the crusades on the other. Compared with those gigantic movements, the struggle for the Rhine sank temporarily almost into insignificance.

And yet it was by no means suppressed. Lotharingia—henceforth Lorraine—proved the new Empire's most vulnerable spot. That country's magnates, by their constant feuds with Germany, paved the way for an intervention which France desired all the more, seeing that it corresponded to interests regarded by her as vital.

Nor did it last long before France discovered an opportunity to intervene effectively. Already in 978 King Lothaire of France appeared before the walls of Aix-la-Chapelle. But his expedition ended in a failure. Lothaire himself died in 986, and in 987 his son followed him to the grave. Thereupon the House of Capet ascended the French throne and initiated that great imperialist policy which, with unerring instinct, was destined in the course of centuries to make France the foremost Power in Europe. The historic struggle for the Rhine became relegated to momentary oblivion, being overshadowed by other far-reaching aims of the German Hohenstaufen dynasty.

The marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the divorced wife of Louis VII of France,¹ with Henry II of England, who succeeded to that country's throne in 1154, increased the dynastic divergencies between the Houses of Capet and Plantagenet, since South-West France formed part of Eleanor's dowry. England now entered definitely into the sphere of European politics. Richard Cœur-de-Lion's capture by Duke Leopold of Austria on the former's return from his crusade, and his prolonged captivity, afforded Philip Augustus of France a welcome opportunity to take possession of Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou. Meanwhile internal dissensions broke out in Germany. Henry VI, the most violent, but in many respects also the ablest, of the Hohenstaufen Emperors, whose sway extended southwards as far as Sicily, eastwards to Greece, westwards to Spain, and whose powerful hand extorted tribute even from Byzantium, found no successor worthy of him. North Germany elected as Emperor Otto IV, son of Henry the Lion, himself a brother-in-law of Cœur-de-

¹ Divorced by an arbitrary decree of her husband's, without any consultation with the Holy See. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

Lion. South Germany preferred Philip of Swabia, Henry VI's brother. France profited by this intestine struggle. Whereas the Plantagenets supported their relative Otto, Philip Augustus hastened to assist the latter's rival. A devastating war resulted, in which, during the second decade of the thirteenth century, the attitudes of France, England, and Germany towards each other in Europe became defined for the first time. This event was destined to exert a lasting influence during six centuries on the respective positions of the three Powers in question.

The battle of Bouvines in 1214, which found English and French valour pitted against each other, and which resulted in a triumph for the French arms, marks a decisive date in history. For this battle, which at first sight appears to a superficial observer as a mere episode in the wearisome dynastic conflict between Capet and Plantagenet, foreshadowed, as a matter of fact, an epoch-making modification of the relations between France, England, and Germany, and changed the entire aspect of European politics, thereby creating a new horizon for what we might appropriately call the immemorial struggle between France and Germany on the Rhine.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE DOWNFALL OF THE HOHENSTAUFENS TO THE EXPEDITION OF THE VALOIS TO THE RHINE

Europe at the dawn of the thirteenth century—French expansion—Rudolph of Habsburg—Adolph of Nassau and Edward I—Albert of Habsburg—Battle of Göllheim—Albert I and Philippe-le-Bel—Treaty of Vaucouleurs—Battle of Courtrai—France's "natural frontiers"—The Rhine as object of French policy—Solution of the continuity of the Rhine-Rhône route—The Alpine passes—Struggle for the Roman Crown—The Swiss Confederation—Battle of Morgarten—Battle of Mühldorf—Louis the Bavarian in Italy—Edward III at Coblenz—The Hundred Years War—The "Golden Bull" and the Rhine—The Duchy of Burgundy—The Burgundian Gate and the Jura Passes menaced—Austria and the Swiss Confederation—Battle of Sempach—Recommencement of the struggle for the Rhine—Charles of Valois on the Upper Rhine—Enunciation of France's claim to the Rhine—Resistance of Alsace and Lorraine—The position of the Swiss in the struggle for the Rhine.

ON the threshold of the thirteenth century two portentous events occurred to change the aspect of the Mediterranean world. In alliance with Venice, French warriors conquered Byzantium in 1204 and erected there a Latin Empire which lasted for the space of one generation; whilst in the South-West, Alfonso VIII of Castille defeated the Moors at Naves di Tolosa in 1212, and drove them back as far as Cordova and Granada.

Meanwhile the genius of Frederic II, last, and in some respects most brilliant, scion of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, conferred on the Holy Roman Empire a truly European—and consequently, at that epoch, world-wide—importance. But the great Frederic incorporated not so much a German as an Italian idea. Himself born and bred in Italy, he invariably regarded Sicily as his Empire's centre and Germany as a mere appendix of that Empire. His death plunged Germany into a series of devastating internal feuds between rival candidates for the Imperial Crown. This anarchy proved

France's opportunity. French power already penetrated far southwards into that beautiful region of which the inhabitants spoke the harmonious language of *Oc*; and the House of Capet cast its shadow over the fair town of Lyons, after having previously annexed the Duchy of Burgundy, thereby crossing the ancient natural frontiers of Gaul formed by the Marne, Seine, and Loire, where ten centuries before Julius Cæsar had fought the momentous battle of Bibracte. That part of Burgundy which still retained its independence (the so-called "Free County") and the Duchy of Savoy, the "key territories" of the Upper Rhenish plain and the Swiss plateau respectively, remained outside the French sphere of power.

Rudolph of Habsburg's election to the Imperial Crown in 1273 did not put an end to the French advance; but the latter had nevertheless to reckon henceforth with the existence of a rival will which constituted an impediment. Rudolph did not allow his attention to be diverted from the Rhine, even after acquiring for the House of Habsburg those immense domains in Austria and Styria which formed the basis on which his descendants subsequently reared the most powerful dynasty in Europe. French influence on the Rhine, in his days, was conspicuous by its total absence. Switzerland, Alsace, the Palatinate, the entire Lower Rhine, were all of them exclusively inhabited by German populations. When Rudolph of Habsburg, feeling the approach of death, rode for the last time, in July 1291, from Strasbourg to Speyer, he accomplished this final journey through a purely German land.

In the thirteenth century the Rhine still lay deeply embedded within the German Empire. It did not flow through a frontier region, notwithstanding the fact that the disappearance of the Hohenstaufen dynasty and Rudolph of Habsburg's Austrian policy shifted Germany's centre of gravity towards the East. But although individual Rhenish cities—we need only think of Strasbourg, Mayence, and Cologne—rose at this epoch to unprecedented heights of prosperity, the power of the whole, as incorporated in the Imperial Throne, rapidly decreased. When Rudolph of Habsburg, the restorer of kingly might and dignity in Germany, died in 1291, his death plunged the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations once more into anarchy.

The Electors chose as Rudolph's successor, not his son Albert of Austria, but the impecunious and energetic Count Adolph of Nassau, whom Germany's territorial sovereigns considered less dangerous for their own independence than the powerful Habsburg prince. Adolph of Nassau's election reveals the hapless condition into which the Holy Roman Empire had sunk. Albert of Austria, who confidently anticipated becoming his father's successor on the Imperial Throne, saw his hopes deceived. He nevertheless decided to postpone enforcing his claims until a later date.

Adolph of Nassau's first object was to secure, by the sword, a *Haussmacht* for himself. In endeavouring to achieve this aim he soon forgot his electoral promises and even every notion of kingly dignity. He remained as Emperor what he had always been—namely, a grim old soldier able to fight bravely for a cause he had sworn to uphold, and who in the pursuit of his ambition carried fire and destruction into Thuringian castles and strongholds. Yet, although he lacked all kingly qualities, Fate reserved for him a great historic rôle.

King Edward I of England, being at war with Philippe-le-Bel of France for possession of the Flemish Glacis, applied for help to the German monarch. Adolph of Nassau suffered himself to be persuaded to lend the required assistance. Not Germany's interests, but English bribes amounting to 100,000 silver marks, prompted his decision. But he reckoned without Pope Boniface VIII, who embraced the cause of the House of Capet, and forbade the Emperor to intervene. Adolph obeyed this peremptory order from Rome, and made use of the armaments collected by him against France to continue his war in Thuringia. Philippe-le-Bel, however, did not intend to ignore the menace which had been proffered him. He immediately espoused the cause of Adolph's rival, Albert of Austria, and seized the opportunity to *intervene in the struggle for the German Crown*. The French King stretched out a covetous hand towards Burgundy, thereby shifting the scene of Franco-German rivalry nearer to Germany's Western frontiers. Albert of Austria now openly claimed the German throne, supported by the princes of Eastern Germany and by Bavaria, who still maintained her historic front against Bohemia and Hungary. Thus, while France wrestled for the

extension of her boundaries with England, a new war of succession broke out within the Holy Roman Empire, a war destined to be carried-out on the Rhine's banks.

At the head of a proud array of Bohemian, Hungarian, and Austrian knights, Duke Albert set out from Austria, intending to reach the Rhine. But having discovered, when still in the Alb Hills in Swabia, his flank to be threatened by Adolph, he retreated on the Lake of Constance. Successfully evading his adversary, Albert arrived at the source of the Danube, and in the spring of 1298 appeared with his Army in the valley of the Rhine. Pursued by Adolph, Albert avoided a battle and marched towards Mayence in order to strengthen his cause by obtaining the adhesion of the Electors. On June 23rd the latter decided in his favour, and proclaimed Adolph to be deposed for violation of the Constitution and the perpetration of acts of gross cruelty in Thuringia. They then selected Albert of Habsburg as his successor. Adolph refused to acknowledge this decision; it consequently came to a battle at Göllheim, near Kaiserslautern, in which Albert proved victorious, and which cost Adolph of Nassau his life. He was slain in a personal encounter with his royal adversary, who refused permission for him to be buried among the German Emperors in Speyer Cathedral.

Henceforth in undisputed possession of the Imperial and German Crowns, Albert of Habsburg also inherited the duty of repairing the damage done by Adolph's policy to Germany in the latter's relations with her Western neighbour—no easy task, assuredly, since Philip IV (le Bel) now emerged from the background and demanded from the victor of Göllheim the price for France's friendship, and compensation for Adolph's alliance with England. Albert I—as he is henceforth called—sought to protect both the Empire and his own House as much as possible against Philip's claims; but his position was rendered exceedingly difficult, not only in consequence of Adolph's policy, but also by reason of his own ambitious efforts to oust his rival and ascend the Imperial Throne. He remained faithful to the alliance which had rendered his accession possible; nor did he, as a matter of fact, feel sufficiently strong in any case to resort to arms.

Negotiations commenced between France and the Empire.

When Albert I arrived at Vaucouleurs, on the Meuse, to meet the French King and conclude a pact of perpetual peace and friendship between the French Crown and the Holy Roman Empire, the latter found itself at a distinct disadvantage. In the struggle for the Rhine it had already lost more than one battle. Albert saw himself confronted by frontier claims which, in view of his entanglement, he could not well refuse to admit. Philip IV now reaped the seed sown at Göllheim. He pushed forward the French boundary from Champagne over the Argonnes as far as the Meuse, and across the Morvan and the plateau of Langres into the valley of the Saône. The county of Bar and parts of the bishopric of Toul were placed under French sovereignty; France assumed protection over the bishopric of Verdun; whilst the so-called "Free County" of Burgundy, the key to the Upper Rhine, became a French fief. This last provision implied—since vassalage was already at this time a meaningless and antiquated term—that France definitely established herself on the threshold of the Burgundian Gate.

Philip IV's superiority over Albert I in respect of will power and political foresight cannot be called in question. He took advantage of his agreement with the Emperor to conclude peace simultaneously with England, thus depriving Flanders of England's support. He gave his sister Margaret in marriage to Edward I, whilst, on the other hand, the latter's eldest son, the future King Edward II, wedded Philip's daughter Isabella—a union destined to sow the seed of the Hundred Years War between France and England which broke out in 1337. But Philip's schemes reached farther still. He obtained Albert I's consent to a marriage between Philip's second sister Blanche with Albert's eldest son Rudolph, whereby Blanche received the Habsburg domain of Alsace as her dowry. *This constituted the first French attempt to snatch Alsace.*

Albert consented to this match in the hope of thereby securing Burgundy for himself. He compelled the Alsatian Estates to do homage to Blanche after her wedding. Fortunately for Germany, death, overtaking Blanche in 1305, saved the Empire—for the time being—from the effects of Albert's rash policy. Blanche's premature demise released the Alsatians from their oath of fealty to the House of Capet.

But they did not forget these events, which opened their eyes to the danger threatening them from the West.

The alliance between Albert I and Philip IV imperilled Germany's future even more than the most bitter enmity could have done; for whereas Albert utilized it merely for the purpose of extending his *Hausmacht*, Philip took full advantage of it to develop the might of France. At the beginning of the fourteenth century French influence cast its shadows over Italy and the Netherlands, and spread rapidly in Burgundy and Lorraine. About this time the Flemish revolted against the oppression of Philip's bailiffs. Following the example set them in the famous Sicilian Vespers in 1282, the Flemish organized the so-called "Ghent Mass" in 1302. Not a single Frenchman escaped. This blood bath proved the signal for a general uprising. Town after town fell into Flemish hands. A promptly despatched French Army under the Comte d'Artois encountered the Flemish insurgents on July 11th, 1302, at Courtrai. The ensuing battle, which has earned fame as the "Battle of the Golden Spurs," thus called owing to the headlong flight of the French, ended in the complete rout of the latter. The fury of the Flemish against their persecutors was such that they gave no quarter. But although the Flemish hung up the golden spurs of their fallen foes in the church at Maastricht in thanksgiving to Heaven for their deliverance, the battle of Courtrai did not decide the war. Philip IV called all his subjects to arms, invaded and devastated Flanders, and forced that country to cede him Douai, Lille, and Béthune.

The desperate and heroic struggle waged by the Flemish for liberty found no echo in the German Empire. Being sorely pressed alike by the Pope and the Electors, Albert I could not afford to renounce his alliance with France. The Rhenish Electors rose against their ambitious and overbearing Emperor, who, however, reduced them to submission with the aid of the Rhenish towns. Having done this, he hastened to make peace with Pope Boniface VIII, who, formerly Philip IV's ally, had since become his bitter adversary. Albert purchased peace with Christ's Vicar at the price of sacrificing what still remained of Imperial prerogatives in ecclesiastical matters. His principal reason for wishing to get rid of all complications in the West was to be able to realize his plans

in the East, where he coveted new crowns and new territories. The pursuit of this Eastern policy completely diverted his attention from the Rhine.

Meanwhile Philip IV's struggle with Pope Boniface VIII ended in the latter's discomfiture. Having fallen into French hands, and been odiously insulted and maltreated, Boniface had no option left but to resign, which he did in 1307. Two years later Clement V, his second successor, found himself obliged to transfer the See of St. Peter from Rome to Avignon. The French Monarchy's might assumed impressive proportions. France could be plainly heard knocking at her Eastern neighbour's door and demanding her "natural frontiers." Philip IV's Crown lawyers formulated two theses. The more moderate among them demanded for France the so-called "four rivers boundary," *i.e.* the territory between the Scheldt, Meuse, Saône, and Rhône; the extremists, on the other hand, urged a return to Julius Cæsar's "natural frontiers," and claimed the Pyrenees, the Maritime Alps, and the Rhine.

The struggle for the Rhine now enters into the foreground of the European arena; the possession of that river becomes the aim of a definite and far-sighted French policy.

Germany's weakness favoured this French policy. Philip IV proceeded to systematically invest German vassals with French fiefs and to distribute pensions among his German friends, with disastrous results for the Empire. Creatures of the French King were appointed to the Sees of Cologne and Treves, and swore perpetual fidelity to him as their "bene-factor." They expressly limited this oath, it is true, by excepting from it their duties towards the Church and the Holy Roman Empire; but their obligations to France proved stronger than their reservations. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that when Albert I was assassinated by his nephew in 1308, the Rhine basin should have been in imminent danger of being drawn within the orbit of French influence.

On hearing of Albert's sudden death, Philip resolved to participate himself directly in the election of the new German King. But he acted circumspectly. He did not claim the German throne for himself, but proposed his brother Charles of Valois as candidate. Nevertheless this proved even too

much for the German Electors, who were suspicious of French designs and feared for their own liberties. Consequently they elected, not Charles of Valois, but Count Henry of Lützelburg, a brother of the Archbishop of Treves, who ascended the throne as Henry VII on November 27th, 1308. Henry having been educated conformably with Romanic ideas, Philip IV consoled himself with what he considered a half-success—all the more so as Henry had taken an oath of fealty to the King of France as his liege-lord. But events soon showed Philip that he had lost the game. Henry VII steered his own course. He reverted to the universalist idea of the Roman Empire as conceived by the Hohenstaufens, and sacrificed German national aspirations to his Italian aims.

In 1309 Henry led an expedition to Italy, in order to unite once more that country to Germany and restore the glory of the Imperial Crown. But whilst this spiritual son of the Hohenstaufens marched on Rome, France steadily continued her advance against the Holy Roman Empire's western frontiers. French troops entered the valley of the Rhône and took Lyons. When Henry VII died at Siena in 1313, Philip IV stood at the pinnacle of his power, immediately in front of the western gates of the Rhine basin.

In every direction France reached the "four rivers frontier."¹ Her forces, after passing through the Argonnes, crossed the Meuse; through the Côte d'Or they arrived at the Saône and the Doubs; they emerged from the Cévennes into the valley of the Rhône; and by capturing the fortresses of Lille, Douai, and Béthune they trebly secured the great natural entrance to the Seine basin between the Lys and the Scheldt. The wave of French expansion flooded the western Germanic zone.

The continuity of the Rhine-Rhône route, of that classical Cæsarian line of communication between North Sea and Mediterranean, the most convenient and direct highroad alike for armies and traders and pilgrims, was interrupted. Avignon being in the hands of the Duke of Anjou, Lyons in those of the King of France, the Rhône valley was henceforth closed. Emperors anxious to proceed to Italy were in future compelled to cross either the St. Gotthard, the Splügen, or the Brenner.

¹ See p. 64.

The smaller the number of routes of access from Germany to Italy, the more important it became to secure them. So long as the Holy Roman Empire desired to maintain its political connection with the land of Cæsars and Popes, it remained incumbent on the former to keep the Alpine passes open. The Emperors had, indeed, always been conscious of the vast importance of these passes, and done everything possible to maintain direct control of them. Their guardianship was confided to the inhabitants of Uri and Schwyz, to whom, in return, the Hohenstaufens guaranteed liberty and protection ; and these sturdy mountaineers invariably remained staunch adherents of the Imperial cause. On August 12th, 1291, the population of Uri and Schwyz swore a solemn oath of perpetual alliance, and obtained from Emperor Adolph of Nassau a confirmation of their charter of freedom. On Albert I imprudently attempting to bring them under his yoke, they rose to arms, conformably with their oath of alliance, in defence of their rights. Henry VII put an end to the trouble by granting their demands ; but the storm clouds which had arisen around Mount St. Gotthard betokened the advent of a new era and were reflected in the waters of the Rhine.

The struggle for the Rhine now presented itself in the form of a competition for the Roman Crown, rendered vacant by Henry VII's death. Philip of France again appeared on the scene. Once more he did not demand the crown for himself, but for his son Philip of Poitou, or alternatively for his brother Charles of Valois. His attempt failed, despite a generous distribution of funds. But the electors could come to no agreement. Whereas a majority selected Louis the Bavarian, a minority pronounced in favour of Frederic the Handsome, Albert of Habsburg's son. A new dynastic conflict ensued, still further debilitating Germany's already grievously weakened body politic, greatly to France's advantage. Had Philip IV not died a few days after this double election, France would certainly have seized the opportunity to penetrate yet farther into that Lotharingian territory so loosely connected with the Holy Roman Empire.

Philippe-le-Bel died at the height of his power and the zenith of his success. France lost in him a great monarch, Germany a purposeful and determined adversary. His death proved the signal for the outbreak of internecine feuds in

France. The feudal nobles, whom Philip's strong hand had held in check, raised their heads again, and thus impeded France's expansionist policy.

Whilst Louis X of France, Philip's son, strove with his barons, Germany resounded with the din of a new dynastic struggle, the flames of which Pope John XXII fanned to the best of his ability. The bitter conflict between Louis the Bavarian and Frederic the Handsome lasted eight years. From a general point of view, the importance of this intestine war resided in the fact that Louis, sure of the democratic support of the people and the lower clergy, laid claim to the Imperial Crown in the teeth of the Pope's fierce opposition, the result being to shake the Holy Roman Empire to its foundations.

Among Louis the Bavarian's supporters were the Swiss, whose privilege of immediacy Louis confirmed. They thereby incurred Frederic the Handsome's wrath, who despatched a punitive expedition against them under his brother Duke Leopold of Austria. On November 15th, 1315, the mountaineers decisively routed Leopold's forces at Morgarten. Not until seven years later did the rival German Kings encounter each other. In the fall of 1322 the two Habsburg brothers, Frederic and Leopold, embarked on a campaign with the object of definitely crushing Louis the Bavarian between them. But before they could unite, Louis, assisted by King John of Bohemia, marched to meet Frederic. The battle of Mühldorf sealed Frederic's fate. Taken prisoner, he renounced all claims either to the German or Imperial thrones.

In 1327 Louis the Bavarian, now uncontested German King, set out for Italy *via* the Brenner to take possession of the Imperial Roman Crown. He did so despite the ban placed on him by Pope John XXII. An excommunicated Bishop crowned him with the iron crown of the Langobards; and not the Pope nor his Legate, but the people of Rome, offered him the Imperial Crown, which a counter-Pope placed on his head. The new Emperor sought to overcome the various hostile forces arrayed against him everywhere. But he lacked strength to simultaneously assert his power in Italy against the House of Anjou, enforce obedience on obstreperous princes in Germany, carry-on his struggle with Pope John XXII, who resided in Avignon, and take the field

against France. Depressed by the Papal ban, hesitating between divergent counsels, he vainly sought for compromises, and by so doing missed the opportunity for accomplishing a really great exploit.

This proved his undoing, for some ten years after starting on his expedition to Rome an opportunity presented itself to him of achieving such an exploit in the struggle for the Rhine. At that date commenced the Hundred Years War between France and England, and King Edward III appealed to Germany for help. Philip IV's direct descendants in the male line having died out, Edward III claimed the French Crown as son of Philip's daughter Isabella. In the same year Louis the Bavarian concluded an alliance with Edward III, and in 1338 the Plantagenet King sailed up the Rhine to confirm this pact. The Emperor awaited him at Coblenz. Clothed in his imperial robes, surrounded by his Electors and the flower of German knighthood, he greeted his royal ally on the threshold of St. Castor's Church, at the confluence of Rhine and Moselle. The Plantagenet requested Louis to arbitrate in the dispute concerning the French Crown, hoping to strengthen his cause in the coming struggle by means of the anticipated Imperial decision. Conformably with Edward's desire, the Emperor adjudged to Isabella's son the crown of the Capets, and appointed him Vicar of the Holy Roman Empire for the left bank of the Rhine as far as the Argonnes Forest. This manifestation obviously implied a very close alliance, of which armed assistance would be the natural complement. The Empire seemed to recover at a stroke all the territory that Adolph of Nassau and Albert I had allowed Philip IV of France to annex. Since the Electors had a short while previously declared that an elected Roman-German King did not require Papal authorization to govern either Germany or the Empire, and since a Reichstag had expressly denied the Pope's right to sit in judgment on the Emperor, the pact solemnly confirmed at St. Castor's Church derived its prestige solely from the Imperial Crown's restored dignity.

But the impressive ceremony at Coblenz produced no lasting results, owing to Louis the Bavarian's want of political acumen. He could not bring himself to recognize that France, by keeping the Pope in captivity in Avignon, was merely utilizing him as a cat's-paw for the purposes of her anti-

Imperial and anti-German policy. When, shortly after the pompous meeting at the confluence of Rhine and Moselle, Louis again endeavoured to reach a compromise with the Papal instrument for the furtherance of French aims, the newly concluded alliance with England fell to pieces. Louis could not summon up sufficient energy for a decisive action against France.

The war between France and England had the effect of barring any further progress of the French towards the Rhine for nearly a century. It carried the English into the heart of the Seine region and rendered them masters of Bordeaux, Rouen, and Calais.

Shortly before Louis the Bavarian departed this life, he saw himself menaced by a rival King in Germany, Charles IV, whom a majority of the Electors placed on the throne at the instigation of Pope Clement VI. Louis's death left the Empire torn by internal dissensions. The House of Bavaria vainly endeavoured to set up a rival claimant to Charles IV, who received the Imperial Crown at Rome in 1355, and who adhered to his friendship with the French reigning dynasty of Valois—a friendship he had cultivated since his earliest youth.

Anxious to avoid his predecessor's fate and to secure the lasting friendship of his Electors, Charles IV issued from Nuremberg in 1355 the "Golden Bull," in which, after confirming their right to elect the German Kings, he guaranteed them the indivisibility of their possessions and almost complete territorial sovereignty. This implied the virtual end of imperial and kingly power within the Holy Roman Empire.

Henceforth the Rhine no longer enjoyed the protection derived from a strong German monarchy, but lay embedded in the territories of Electors whose interests were divergent and each of whom did as he liked. Nevertheless, it still flowed between German banks; neither Switzerland, nor Alsace, nor the Palatinate, nor the Rhenish plain, were as yet Franco-German boundary regions. But despite the fact that France was too fully engrossed by her war with England to entertain the idea of an advance on the Rhine, the danger for Germany's Western Marches continued to loom ominously on the horizon, until it at last assumed concrete shape.

This time, however, it was not the French, but the

Burgundians, who appeared. In 1363 the younger branch of the House of Valois assumed at Dijon the title of Duke of Burgundy, whereupon its forward march towards East and North began. On Duke Charles the Bold marrying the heiress of Flanders in 1369, Malines and Antwerp fell into Burgundian hands.

The Rhône had been lost to the Empire, and now the Scheldt followed suit. The passes of the Ardennes and the Burgundian Gate were gravely imperilled. In the North, Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and the small principalities on the Lower Rhine united to face a common danger; in the South, the task of defending the Empire was incumbent on Austria, the Imperial cities on the Upper Rhine, and Switzerland.

The Burgundian Gate and the passes through the Jura were the first to be threatened. They were but weakly defended, for Austria's power had steadily decreased ever since Morgarten. The Swiss wrested one slice of territory after another from her, and the battle of Sempach in 1386, which compelled her to recognize the Swiss Confederation, composed of the cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zürich, Zug, Glarus, Lucerne, and Berne, dealt a shattering blow at her fast waning strength in that region. In the nick of time a marriage between Duke Leopold III and Catherine, daughter of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, saved Austria from losing, into the bargain, Alsace and the Black Forest. But if this union consolidated Austria's precarious position, it also implied a new danger, since the Austrian possessions in front of the Burgundian Gate were bestowed on Catherine of Burgundy as a wedding gift. Duke Leopold's death without male descendants in 1411, however, averted the peril, since his widow concluded an agreement with her brother-in-law Frederic, under the terms of which the right of succession was vested in him and his heirs.

The end of the Hundred Years War between France and England marked the recommencement of the struggle between France and Germany for the Rhine, and this despite the fact that Burgundy dominated both Rhône and Meuse. When France and England concluded a truce in 1444, these two countries and Burgundy were Powers on a footing of equality. France and England became national States

characterized by a development of civic liberties, whilst Burgundy constituted a feudal realm, the brilliancy of which reminded the spectator of past times.

Duke Frederic of Austria, by virtue of his convention with Catherine of Burgundy lord of Alsace, being again at loggerheads with the Swiss and unable to defend himself, applied to Charles VII of France for aid. Charles acceded to this request the more willingly since it gave him a long coveted chance. The Dauphin marched through the Burgundian Gate to the Upper Rhine, whilst King Charles himself advanced through Champagne against the Duchy of Lorraine and the Moselle. In the summer of 1444 French Armies stood on German soil in view of the Rhine.

When Charles VII concluded peace with the Swiss Confederation after a campaign of varying fortunes, in which the Swiss distinguished themselves by their heroism, he brought about a great transformation in the struggle for the Rhine. The Swiss dropped out of the German front altogether. The Dauphin's troops devastated Alsace from Strasbourg to Schaffhausen, whilst Charles VII's Army lay before Metz and ravaged Lorraine. The French now stood on the flank of the Black Forest and before the Saverne Pass. The responsibility incurred by Frederic as Duke of Austria, when he invited the help of the French in his strife with Switzerland, produced untoward consequences for him on ascending the German throne as Frederic III. For the first time we find the thesis that the Rhine constitutes France's frontier officially enunciated in a message addressed by the Dauphin—who based himself on the opinion of French Crown lawyers—to the town of Bâle. Since this town successfully refused to admit the French within its gates, the enunciation in question bore no immediate practical results. But its importance for the future cannot be overestimated.

In view of the vigorous resistance offered by the populations of Alsace and Lorraine, Charles VII decided to evacuate these countries. The French, nevertheless, did not abandon their claim to the Rhine, nor did they forget that they had watered their steeds in the Rhine in 1444 for the first time since Charles the Bald appeared on the river's banks at Andernach in 876.

Had France enjoyed at that time her full liberty of action,

had this liberty not been restricted by fear of England and Burgundy, there can be no doubt that the struggle for the Rhine would have ended already in 1445 with the conquest of Alsace. It was no mere accident that her troops endeavoured to capture Bâle, the strategic and commercial key to the Upper Rhenish plain, and Metz, which defends the plateau of Lorraine against Western invaders. These attempts—permanently frustrated in the case of Bâle, temporarily in that of Lorraine—formed the essential part of an organized plan of attack on the German Empire. Charles VII, adopting the claims of Julius Cæsar and of his own Carolingian and Capetian predecessors, demanded, conformably with French tradition, the Rhine's left bank. His raid into Upper Rhenish territory failed owing to the courage and spirit of sacrifice of a handful of Swiss burgesses, and to the determined resistance of the populations of Alsace and Lorraine. But the officially enunciated French claim henceforth weighed heavily on the German Empire's destinies.

Although the Swiss unhesitatingly refused to admit French pretensions within the bounds of their territory, they none the less bore an undying grudge against the House of Habsburg, against which hostilities continued. In 1452 they concluded an alliance with the French Crown, and subsequently renewed the pact with Louis XI, Charles VII's successor. Duke Sigmund of Austria finally came to terms with this indomitable people in 1468, and the terms were onerous for Austria. Expanding beyond the Jura, the Confederation retained possession of Mulhouse in Upper Alsace, Waldshut, and the Upper Black Forest.

Thus we see the Swiss people established in 1470 as an independent Power on the German Empire's vulnerable flank from the St. Gotthard Pass to the Burgundian Gate. Repelled by an ill-advised German King, who drove them finally into an alliance with France, the issue of the struggle for the Rhine in this particular region henceforth depended on them. No one—and least of all the Swiss themselves—could foretell how they would fulfil the mission thus confided to them, the future being too full of uncertainty to permit of any calculations.

CHAPTER VI

THE BURGUNDIAN DUCHY AND THE POSITION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE RHINE'S SOURCE

France renounces nothing—The Duchy of Burgundy—Accession of Charles the Bold—Extension of his power—Charles and the Emperor Frederic III—Rising of the Swiss and Alsatians—Louis XI and the Swiss Confederation—Siege of Neuss—Peace between the Empire and Burgundy—Iolanthe of Savoy—Louis XI and Edward IV—The struggle for Lorraine—Maximilian and Marie—Battle of Murten—Duke René of Lorraine and the Swiss—Death of Charles the Bold—Peace of Zürich—Division of Charles the Bold's heritage—Maximilian's second marriage—Struggle for the mastery of Italy—From the Rhine to the Po—Feud between Swabians and Swiss—Swiss war of independence—Treaty of Bâle—The Swiss Confederation and the Rhine—Switzerland as a Great Power—The Swiss in Milan—Treaty of Gallarate—Progress of French expansion—France's Rhenish policy and the Italian war.

WHEN France withdrew her troops from Alsace in 1445, she by no means renounced her claim to the Rhine. The French political vocabulary knows no such word as renunciation. Charles VII did not retreat before Frederic III; he merely returned to the Seine to finish the war with England; and he left Burgundy as protagonist of Romanic civilization on the banks of the Rhine.

The Burgundian Empire, which Charles the Bold inherited in 1467 from his clever father Philip the Good, already at that date reached as far as the chalk cliffs of Picardy and the banks of Lake Leman; but the Duke of Burgundy still remained a vassal alike of the King of France and of the Emperor. He chafed under this restraint, and already as Comte de Charolais had taken up arms against Louis XI. The capture of the towns of Picardy rewarded his efforts. He now declared war a second time on Louis; and when the latter rashly went into his camp to negotiate, Charles made the King prisoner, and kept him in captivity until Louis consented to cede Flanders and Picardy to Burgundy. Louis never forgot this humiliation. But although he did

not keep the agreement thus extorted from him, he carefully refrained from weakening France's forces in a war on a large scale with so powerful an adversary, and contented himself with stirring up other enemies against Duke Charles.

Neither did the latter desire hostilities with France; but he neglected to economize his strength as prudent Louis XI did, and wasted his resources in the pursuit of gigantic schemes. He lent the spendthrift Sigmund of Austria 50,000 gulden to redeem Waldshut and the Upper Black Forest from the Swiss; in return for this loan Sigmund transferred to Charles the former's property at the Burgundian Gate, in Alsace, and the Black Forest. Charles then turned against Geldern, one of a number of small principalities created during the course of centuries on the Lower Rhine between Cologne and Emmerich, and caused this territory likewise to be pledged to him; annexed Nymwegen; and established his rule on the Lower Rhine. He intervened in the strife between the Elector of Cologne and the Estates, concluded an alliance with Archbishop Rupert, and obtained from him the protectorate over the heavily encumbered Archbishopric.

Thus within four years Charles the Bold attained the summit of his power. The spring of 1473 saw him securely seated on either bank of the Upper and Lower Rhine, whilst he encircled the Duchy of Lorraine with an iron ring. By means of alliances with Duke Amédée of Savoy and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, Charles extended his might beyond the banks of Lake Leman and the Valaisian Alps as far as the plain of Lombardy. The ancient Carolingian Lotharingia, *i.e.* the vast region watered by Rhine, Meuse, Rhône, and Po, emerged from out of the shadows of the past.

Charles now proceeded to propose to Frederic III that the latter should cede the Imperial Crown to Burgundy's Duke in exchange for the marriage of Charles's daughter and heiress Marie, who had already no fewer than six princely suitors, to Frederic's son Maximilian. The bargain appeared quite acceptable to Frederic personally. The two sovereigns met at Treves in 1473 to arrange details of the coronation and the betrothal. Charles demanded the frontiers of ancient Lotharingia; further the towns of Cambrai, Tournai, Liège,

and Utrecht ; and, lastly, the river Ems as boundary of his dominions.

Frederic III saw in a marriage between Maximilian and Marie the surest guarantee of the future greatness of his House ; he therefore did all he could to satisfy Charles without offending either the Electors or the King of France. He found himself in a most uncomfortable position, with Louis XI's ominous warnings on the one hand, and the unveiled threats of the Electors on the other ; for both Louis and the German Princes viewed with alarm the prospect of such an increase of Burgundy's power and prestige. Frederic felt that it would be impossible for him to keep the balance between the conflicting parties. He therefore avoided signing the pact, by leaving Treves secretly for Cologne. Furious at this checkmate, Charles proceeded to the Upper Rhine to show himself as conqueror to his newly acquired Alsatian subjects. He confided the administration of the country to Peter von Hagenbach, a knight from the Sundgau, who in his master's name extorted heavy tribute from the unfortunate population. The citizens of Säckingen, Rheinfelden, Altkirch, Thann, Ensisheim, and Brisach were reduced to the condition of Burgundian subjects ; around Mulhouse, which had been included in the Swiss Confederation, a Customs cordon was drawn, and the town required to acknowledge the sovereignty of Burgundy ; Bâle saw itself threatened by a commercial blockade ; whilst shipping on the Rhine passed under Burgundian control.

Under these circumstances the danger entailed by Burgundy's penetration into the Upper Rhenish region became evident alike to Duke Sigmund of Austria, the Swiss, and the Swabian Estates. The Swiss entered into an alliance with the Bishop of Constance and the Count of Würtemberg. The towns of Bâle, Colmar, Selestat, and Strasbourg concluded a pact with Sigmund and the Bishops of Strasbourg and Bâle. Louis XI, for his part, succeeded in accomplishing what appeared to be impossible—namely, the conclusion of a general peace between Austria and the Swiss Confederation.

This latter feat constituted a masterpiece of French diplomacy. Austria renounced all political claims in Switzerland, and obtained in exchange the support of the Confederation

against Burgundy. The announcement of the Upper Rhenish alliance and of the reconciliation between Austria and Switzerland produced a profound sensation in the entire Upper Rhine. Alsace rose against her oppressors. On Easter Monday, 1474, the insurgents captured, and shortly afterwards beheaded, Peter von Hagenbach. Everywhere the Burgundian garrisons were driven out, and the German lansquenets deserted Charles's cause. Sigmund hastened to the land of his ancestors and re-took possession of it.

On June 11th, 1474, Louis XI ratified in his turn the treaty of alliance between Switzerland and Austria. This Treaty was his own work—a work intended to be profitable for him. A few weeks later he concluded an alliance with the Confederation; and he proved so cunning in his interpretation of the new agreement that the Swiss subsequently found themselves compelled to wage war in his stead, whilst he himself remained in the background.

Charles the Bold did not march into Alsace to avenge his bailiff Hagenbach's death; he became entangled in a campaign on the Lower Rhine which left him no time for anything else. The Chapter of the See of Cologne had forced Charles's *protégé*, Archbishop Rupert, to resign, and showed itself disposed to resist Burgundy's interference in the affairs of the diocese. Since Hermann of Hesse, whom the Chapter selected to administer the diocese during the vacancy, retired to the fortress of Neuss, on the Rhine, Charles laid siege to that little town. In vain did Emperor Frederic III, obeying his Electors' will, threaten Charles with a declaration of war if he did not retire. Under these circumstances Frederic decided to summon the Swiss, "as faithful members of the Empire's body politic," to arms.

The Swiss promptly responded to the summons. On October 25th, 1474, Berne declared war on Charles the Bold in the name of the Confederation. This document marks Switzerland's entry into the sphere of the *grande politique européenne*—consequently also of the struggle for the Rhine.

Whilst Charles endeavoured without success to capture Neuss; Swiss, Alsatians, and Austrians took the field against him hand in hand. The war with Burgundy proved more popular in Germany than Frederic III anticipated or than he cared for. All Germans instinctively recognized the

peril menacing the Rhine as an attack on the integrity of the Empire. Hence everyone considered the war in the light of a struggle between Germanic and Romanic civilizations. But the Pope intervened, and, his services as mediator being accepted, he brought about peace between Burgundy and the Empire. Charles withdrew from the walls of the beleaguered Rhenish fortress, and drew up a secret agreement with Frederic III respecting the marriage of the latter's son Maximilian with the former's daughter Marie. To this projected union Frederic sacrificed the Swiss, Duke Sigmund, and Alsace. He contented himself with the relief of Neuss and with Charles's renunciation of a Burgundian protectorate over Cologne.

Meanwhile Louis XI sought ways and means to encompass Charles's destruction. With this end in view he awarded bounteous subsidies to the Confederation and gave Savoy to the Bernese, albeit the reigning Duchess Iolanthe, the late Duke's widow, was Louis's own sister. The Duchess, thus betrayed, appealed to Charles the Bold for help. Charles readily acceded to this request, and gave orders to his Army to open hostilities in Franche Comté, whilst he himself proceeded to Luxemburg to prepare his campaign against Louis XI, who found himself simultaneously threatened by an English Army under Edward IV in Flanders.

In this difficult position Louis had recourse to a genial move. In August 1475 he entered Flanders with an Army numerically superior to that of his adversary. But instead of offering battle, he proposed a seven years' truce, repayment of war expenses, an annual pension, and the hand of the young Dauphin for Edward's little daughter Elizabeth. Edward accepted these proposals, replenished his empty exchequer, and returned home satisfied. Louis then turned round swiftly on Charles, to whom he proposed a peace which left the latter full of liberty of action against the Swiss.

Charles the Bold wisely accepted these terms. But despite Iolanthe's distress he did not immediately attack the Confederation, flinging himself instead on the Duchy of Lorraine, which his territories bordered on all sides. Town after town fell into Charles's hands, and in November he appeared before Nancy. Duke René II vainly appealed for aid to the Emperor. Frederic III, forgetful of his duty, declined to

take the field a second time against Burgundy, and sacrificed Lorraine to the engagement of Maximilian and Marie. When, on November 26th, 1475, Nancy opened its gates, a new and vast horizon rose as in a vision before Charles the Bold's eyes. Lorraine linked-up his rich Flemish heritage with the Franche Comté and Burgundy, and its possession assured the unbroken geographical continuity of the Burgundian State. Recollections of Carolingian Lotharingia¹ lured him on.

Having achieved his conquest of Lorraine, Charles set out against the Swiss in January 1476. He knew that the sympathy of the Romanic civilized world accompanied him in an expedition against a people who lacked all respect for courts and obstinately refused to be governed by foreigners, however illustrious. He likewise knew that he had no other foe to fear. Frederic III, like Louis XI, gave him a free hand against the Swiss, forgetting that Frederic himself had summoned the latter to his aid against Burgundy. As for Louis XI, he let it be understood, in a secret declaration, that he would place no obstacles in Charles's way, should Charles endeavour to recover the land pledged to him by Sigmund of Austria on the Upper Rhine.

But Louis, past master in the art of political intrigue, listened in Paris with a sardonic smile to the reports concerning his cousin's adventurous winter campaign. Knowing the Swiss as he did, Louis was content to await the issue.

Events proved that Louis's anticipations were correct. The loss of the battle of Grandson (February 1476), on the Lake of Neuchâtel, did not affect Charles's plans. Thirsting for *revanche*, he established a fortified camp at Lausanne, where he displayed all the Burgundian Court's accustomed pomp. Here Iolanthe visited him, eager like her cousin for vengeance on the victorious Swiss. The Pope tried without success to induce Charles to come to terms with his enemy, in the hope that he would then lead an Army against the Turks who were rapidly advancing westwards from Constantinople. On the eve of renewing his campaign Charles officially announced his daughter's engagement to Maximilian. Frederic III now sought to prevail on Duke Sigmund of Austria to abandon the struggle, but Sigmund remained faithful to his Swiss allies.

¹ See p. 74.

Charles's high-pitched expectations were not destined to be fulfilled. His defeat at Murten on June 10th, 1476, finally destroyed the dream of building up a new Austrasian empire. The hope of resuscitating Carolingian Lotharingia vanished. Herein lies that battle's fundamental historic importance.

If the Swiss victory at Murten relieved Louis XI of Burgundian pressure, this was of secondary importance. That victory achieved much more, since it saved Switzerland and Alsace from being merged in the empire of a new Cæsar. But defeat could not crush Charles the Bold's dauntless spirit.

His next, and last, campaign proved fatal to him. Duke René of Lorraine, profiting by Charles's ill-luck, drove the Burgundian garrisons from Lorraine and entered Nancy in triumph. Veering swiftly round, Charles soon turned the tables on the Lorrainer, whom he forced to flee a second time, and laid siege to Nancy. In his distress Duke René appealed to the Confederation, which declined to participate officially in the conflict, but allowed René to recruit 6,000 Swiss mercenaries. The enemy Armies met on January 5th, 1477, in the vicinity of Nancy. Whilst René's main force attacked Charles's front, the Swiss enveloped the Burgundian right flank and flung it back on the Meurthe. Charles fought like a lion, but the desertion of Lombardian mercenaries sealed his fate. On the marshy fields of Virlay, close to the gates of Nancy, he died a hero's death. Wolves devoured the greater part of the corpse of this proudest of European princes; only a few mangled remains were afterwards discovered and buried with befitting ceremonial in St. George's Church in Nancy.

Charles the Bold's empire, like his corpse, was torn asunder, the former by human wolves not less ravenous than the others. A dynastic war of succession replaced the great struggle between the Germanic and Romanic worlds. Charles the Bold's heritage interested Europe's sovereigns more than the great idea underlying his vast schemes, and the leading Powers of Western Europe were far more eager to divide the defunct ruler's spoils than to check the progress of the Turks, who appeared victorious in Transylvania and before Belgrade.

Not until January 24th, 1478, twelve months after Charles

the Bold's tragic death, was peace concluded at Zürich between Maximilian of Habsburg, Charles's son-in-law, on the one hand, and the Swiss Confederation, Sigmund, and René, on the other. Maximilian purchased from the Confederation for 150,000 florins the right to Franche Comté. The remainder of Charles the Bold's far-flung territories had meanwhile been dismembered. Louis XI occupied Burgundy, Picardy, and Artois; Heldern rose in favour of its ancient rulers against Marie of Burgundy; Liége shook off the Burgundian yoke; and in the Netherlands a revolt organized by the Estates threatened to complete the erstwhile proud feudal empire's dissolution. Charles's daughter did her best to prevent the ruin of her father's work. She made concessions to the Dutch Estates by granting a constitution, and she issued a proclamation calling her people to arms against the French, who had invaded the Hainaut and Franche Comté. Flemings, Walloons, and Upper Burgundians responded enthusiastically, and in 1479 Maximilian, wearing his wife's colours, marched against France at the head of an Army composed of Burgundian knights and of civic guards from the Low Countries. He defeated Louis XI at Guinegate, thereby saving for his wife Flanders, Brabant, and Franche Comté. But he could wrest neither Burgundy nor Picardy from France's hands.

Four years later Marie of Burgundy died, leaving two children, Philip and Margaret. With his wife's death luck seemed to forsake Maximilian. The Low Countries refused him allegiance as Regent, and after another unsuccessful campaign against France he was arrested and imprisoned in Bruges. On a German Army advancing to secure his release, the Dutch Estates set him at liberty, and he returned to Germany, where he found the state of chronic chaos prevailing in the Holy Roman Empire aggravated by his father's policy. From his palace in Vienna Frederic III indefatigably spun the meshes of a net of intrigues which cost him Bohemia and Hungary, and which at the same time failed to counter-balance this loss by recovering the former Austrian possessions on the Upper Rhine. Neither did he succeed in his efforts to regain Charles the Bold's heritage in its entirety for Maximilian. The Swiss had grown too powerful to make concessions to an impotent Empire; and the national unity of the French was far too strong for Charles VIII, Louis XI's

son, to entertain the idea of handing over the rich booty acquired for the nation by his father. After the partition of the great Burgundian State, the German Empire saw its western flank more seriously imperilled than ever. By the end of the fifteenth century France had advanced a considerable step farther in the direction of the Rhine.

In 1493 Maximilian married Galeazzo Sforza's daughter, a union which made him heir to the Duchy of Milan. Destiny willed that this marriage should link Austria's policy to Italy for the best part of four centuries. Its first result was to kindle French antagonism. Putting forward a personal claim to possession of the Duchy, Charles VIII crossed the Alps with a formidable Army to assert his alleged rights. On the threshold of the sixteenth century the plain of Lombardy resounded to the clash of arms and the tramp of soldiers of all countries. In constantly changing alliances French, Spaniards, Swiss, Germans, Venetians, and the Pope fought, sometimes with each other and more often against each other, for the mastery of Italy. Every other conflict in Europe became subsidiary to this great struggle, which cost Maximilian Milan and Verona.

The fight for the Rhine found its continuation on the Po. But on the Rhine itself deadly enmity between two peoples of the same blood led to war at the dawn of the new century—a war resulting in the fixation of new and narrower frontiers for the German Empire in the Upper Rhenish region. Swabians and Swiss wrestled with each other in mortal combat. Behind the former stood Emperor Maximilian, who succeeded Frederic III in 1494; behind the latter we perceive the shadow of Louis XII of France, who renewed the ancient Franco-Swiss alliance in 1495. The House of Habsburg's dynastic policy and the reversion to Austria of the right of succession to the German throne formed the background of this fratricidal feud. The war which broke out in January 1499 ended in September of the same year by the Peace of Bâle between the Empire and the Swabian Union, on the one hand, and the Swiss Confederation, on the other. The importance of the Treaty of Bâle resided not so much in what it expressly stipulated, as in what it implied. The Emperor did not expressly forgo his claim to the territories at the Rhine's source; but the Swiss had *de facto* conquered their

complete independence when they crushed Maximilian's forces at Dornach (July 22nd, 1499). Having previously shaken off Austria's yoke, they were determined henceforth not to admit the sovereignty of the Empire—or, for the matter of that, of any foreign Power—within the boundaries they had carved out for themselves.

Shortly afterwards the towns of Bâle and Schaffhausen were incorporated in the Swiss Confederation, the consequence being to establish a definite strategic frontier for Switzerland on the Rhine. The Confederation thus inherited the guardianship, hitherto entrusted to the Holy Roman Empire, of the region stretching from the Rhine's source to its entry into the Upper Rhenish plain. Switzerland's alliance with France still existed; but it was not so close as to cause the Swiss to neglect their own interests. At the end of their war of independence they felt strong enough to intervene off their own bat in international politics, and to fight in Lombardy solely for themselves.

In 1512 the Swiss attained the summit of their fame and power. As allies of the Sforzas, whom the French had expelled from Milan, they chased the French from that city, restored it to Maximilian Sforza, and received the canton of Ticino and the district of Domodossola as a reward. But dissension found its way into their ranks. The French Crown did not renounce its claims to the Milanese Duchy, and by dint of a skilful combination of threats and bribes, Francis I, Louis XII's nephew and successor, induced them to sign a treaty at Gallarate on September 8th, 1515, destined to assure France of their support. The Swiss failed to observe this pact, and hostilities between them and France followed. Francis I invaded Lombardy, took Milan, and deposed and captured Duke Ludovico Sforza. With the latter's Swiss allies he made peace, but the Swiss lost Domodossola. The might of the French Crown now extended from the North Sea to Milan by way of Lyons and the Simplon. When Emperor Maximilian died in 1519, bequeathing to his grandson Charles V the task of continuing the struggle between the Houses of Habsburg and Valois, France was steadily expanding in every direction.

The struggle for the Rhine only appears in dim outline during the great Italian and Swiss wars which filled the later

years of Maximilian's life. New frontiers had been set to the former Burgundian Empire when Philip, the son of Maximilian and Marie of Burgundy, came into his share of Charles the Bold's heritage. The ancient Burgundian realm's centre of gravity lay henceforth in the Low Countries, which had reached a high degree of prosperity, whereas Franche Comté eked out a mediocre existence in the shadow of its mountains. These countries no longer served as sally-ports for an expansionist policy. They now faced westwards, and were only able with difficulty to ward-off the French advance eastwards—an advance which the tremendous struggle with Austria for the mastery of Italy had not interrupted.

France never for a minute renounced her claim to the Rhine. She determined, it is true, to resist everywhere the growing power of the Habsburgs; but the struggle for the Rhine was more ancient even than the House of Austria. Already in Maximilian's time French statesmen awoke to consciousness of the fact that the surest means of successfully opposing the increasing might of the Habsburgs consisted in establishing France's supremacy on the Rhine.

CHAPTER VII

THE WARS OF RELIGION AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE RHINE

Maximilian's death—Francis I and Charles V—The condition of Europe and the Rhenish problem—Battles of La Bicocca and Pavia—The Holy League—Soliman the Magnificent—Treaty of Cambrai—A campaign of devastation—Franco-Turkish alliance—Siege of St. Dizier—Treaty of Crespy—League of Schmalkalden—Maurice of Saxony—Battle of Mühlberg—Charles V at the summit of his power—Henry II of France and the German Protestant Electors—French advance on the Rhine—Toul, Metz, and Verdun in French hands—Strasbourg and Henry II—Unsuccessful attempt to recover Metz—Abdication of Charles V—Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis—Rise of the Dutch Republic—Germanic flanking positions at the Rhine's source and estuary—Henry of Navarre and Sully—The succession to Jülich-Cleve—Outbreak of the Thirty Years War—Battle of the White Hill—The campaign on the Rhine in 1621—Austria on the Upper Rhine—Second phase of the war—Ferdinand II's policy—Entry of France and Sweden into the war—Richelieu's policy—Richelieu and the French Navy—French imperialism—France's *politique de clientèle*—Lille, Metz, and Casale—Gustave Adolph of Sweden—Battle of Breitenfeld—The Swedes on the Rhine—Richelieu's opportunity—Swedes and French in Alsace—French general advance on the Upper Rhine—Death of Gustave Adolph—The Swedes evacuate Alsace—Louis XIII and the Alsatian Estates—Franco-Swedish alliance—Richelieu and Bernard of Weimar—Pact of St. Germain—The French take Brisach—Mazarin—Condé's victory at Rocroi—Peace of Westphalia—The fate of the Rhine—The Holy Roman Empire at the end of the Thirty Years War—France's triumph.

MAXIMILIAN died on January 12th, 1519, four years after the loss of Milan and Verona, which grieved him even more than the disastrous issue of his war with the Swiss. The great struggle between the Houses of Habsburg and Valois continued, and was soon destined to be complicated by the outbreak of wars of religion which relegated for the time being all national problems to the background. When Maximilian died, France had recovered the full extent of her former strength. Francis I could legitimately claim to be the most powerful European monarch. He enjoyed the especial favour of the Pope, found himself in possession of Burgundy and Milan, had secured the alliance of the Swiss

and the friendship of Venice and Florence, had succeeded in utilizing the English Cardinal Wolsey for the furtherance of France's plans, and had even gained over the countries of Eastern Europe to his cause. Francis I renewed the amicable relations established by his predecessor Louis XII with Denmark and Poland, and endeavoured consistently to encircle Germany from all sides. If he entertained the idea of a crusade, this did not prevent him seeking at the same time an alliance with the Sultan. The principle of nationality began to supplant the sentiment of European solidarity.

His election as Roman Emperor appeared to Francis I as last link in the chain of his ambitious and far-sighted schemes. After Maximilian's death Francis consequently put up his candidature for election as German King. And when the choice of the Electors, notwithstanding his efforts, fell on Charles of Spain, son of Philip of Burgundy and Joan of Castille, grandson of Maximilian, Francis set to work without delay to countercheck this increase of the power of the Habsburgs. He sought an alliance with Henry VIII of England, assured himself of the Pope's support, fanned the flames of insurrection in Italy, lent his aid to an uprising in Spain, and prepared for war.

The struggle between the rival Houses of Habsburg and Valois soon became the dominating factor of European politics, engulfing all European States in its vortex, and becoming inextricably interwoven with the tremendous religious conflicts begotten of the Reformation. It obliterated the historic fight for the Rhine, or at all events concealed it from view. The struggle for the Rhine none the less continued, subterraneously so to speak, until suddenly manifesting itself at a later date with elementary force in all its greatness, confounding itself with dynastic rivalries and wars of religion.

Charles V's Armies advanced in the North towards the Somme, whilst in Italy they marched on the Mincio. On July 27th, 1522, he defeated the French at La Bicocca, and drove them from the territory of the Duchy of Milan. On February 25th, 1525, he routed their troops at Pavia, in a battle which decided the issue of the campaign. The French Army lost one-third of its troops, and King Francis I himself was taken prisoner.

But, paradoxical though it may seem, precisely the extent

of this defeat and the capture of Francis prevented a catastrophe overtaking France. She constituted too essential a part of the European body politic for it to be possible to eliminate her or even thrust her aside. Francis, it is true, reluctantly consented after a prolonged resistance to accept all the conditions dictated to him at Madrid by Charles V; but after his release he declared the pact to be null and void because extorted from him under duress. This standpoint won the approval of Pope Clement VII, who, alarmed by the increase of the Emperor's power, espoused the cause of France.

On Francis renewing the war, Charles V found himself isolated and facing a Holy League which united the Medici Pope, France, England, and the various Italian States in a vast armed alliance.

Francis I tried in vain to recover his lost Italian possessions. His troops were continuously thrown back over the Var into Provence. At this juncture Soliman the Magnificent appeared before Vienna, threatening Ferdinand I, Charles V's brother, and heir to Maximilian's Austrian domains, in his residence. The Turks had captured Belgrade and annihilated the Hungarian Army at Mohacz; after overrunning Hungary they now laid siege to Vienna, so as to clear the road for an advance westwards. If Soliman came as propagator of Islam, he came likewise as the Most Christian King's ally. His attack in the Emperor's rear saved Francis I. In view of the Turkish menace Charles preferred to negotiate peace. The Treaty of Cambrai¹ confirmed Charles's right to Milan and Naples, and left Francis in possession of Burgundy.

But the great struggle was very far indeed from being settled, and since France still found herself strong enough to continue it, peace did not last long. The Treaty of Cambrai had been signed in 1529, and already in 1535 Charles V crossed the Var. Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France, laid waste the entire Rhône region with the object of compelling the Emperor to retreat. Systematic devastation became a strategic measure. This vigorous and ruthless policy saved

¹ Celebrated in history under the name of *Traité des Dames*, so called because it was signed, on behalf of Spain and the Empire, by Margaret of Savoy, Regent of the Netherlands and aunt of Charles V, and on behalf of France by Louise of Angoulême, mother of Francis I. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

France from the worst, and in 1538 Charles V saw himself compelled to conclude another truce.

He had good reasons for so doing. Soliman's fleet appeared menacingly before Naples, and it became manifest that Charles could expect no decisive success on land. The Franco-Turkish alliance now formed a definite part of French policy. France resolutely sought an understanding with Eastern Europe, so as to be able to rely on a solid phalanx of allies on Germany's frontier. French policy has unswervingly adhered to this principle right up to the present day.

When hostilities broke out anew in 1542, the French advanced for the first time with strong forces towards the Rhine. But although the Duc d'Orléans conquered Luxemburg and penetrated far into the Hainaut, the South remained the theatre of decisive actions. Here the Imperial Army under General Guasto suffered a severe defeat at Cresole. But soon afterwards Charles V, leaving Guasto to his fate, reconquered Luxemburg, crossed the Meuse and the Argonnes, and appeared in the summer of 1544 before St. Dizier. At the same time Henry VIII of England besieged Boulogne.

Francis I saw the heart of his kingdom menaced. Despite all his efforts he did not succeed in relieving St. Dizier, whose fall caused him to open peace negotiations. The peace of Crespy (1545) put an end to the war. After a desperate struggle with varying fortunes lasting a quarter of a century, the Emperor finally remained victorious over the King of France. Francis I renounced his claims to Milan and Naples, his suzerainty over Artois and Flanders, and his alliance with Turkey. Charles V, for his part, definitely abandoned Burgundy to France and consented to a marriage between the Duc d'Orléans and a princess of the Imperial House, the Duke to receive the Duchy of Milan. Not Germany, however, but the Spanish branch of the House of Habsburg, emerged victorious from this long struggle, in which all the European Powers, and also Turkey, participated. Charles the Bold's great-grandson took his *revanche* on a descendant of Louis XI. Nemesis ! Nevertheless this dynastic struggle likewise affected Germany's fate.

Peace with France having been concluded, Charles V turned his attention to the German Protestant Princes united in the League of Schmalkalden for the defence of their religious

freedom. The Emperor and his brother Ferdinand of Austria were profoundly hostile to the new creed, of which they entirely lacked all comprehension. Since they had not sufficient strength to exterminate heresy with fire and sword, the only alternative left to them was to come to a compromise with the Protestants and carry the struggle into the political sphere. This proved greatly to their advantage, since German dualism asserted itself not less irresistibly in the religious than in the political domain. Not only were the Germans divided into Catholics and Protestants, but the latter were themselves split-up into Lutherans and Calvinists. Under these circumstances Charles V found no difficulty in successfully applying the device *divide et impera*.

The League of Schmalkalden showed such glaring political incompetence, that Charles V found time to settle his quarrel with Francis I, avert the Turkish peril, and fall upon the League itself, before either the Church or the Emperor lost their ground in Germany. In September 1545 he got rid of the French, and in November of the same year he signed the Truce of Adrianople with the Porte. Thus freed from foreign complications he could concentrate his forces for the suppression of heresy and the establishment of an Imperial autocracy within the Holy Roman Empire.

Charles's attempt to repair the errors and omissions of centuries, and to set up Germany once again as a powerful political unit, failed. It failed because it lacked a national foundation, because Charles himself was a stranger to German thought and feeling, and because for him political oppression formed the corollary of religious persecution and *vice versa*. Charles failed, although the members of the League of Schmalkalden proved very inferior to him alike on the battlefield and in the conference chamber.

With the help of Maurice of Saxony, Charles defeated the Protestants on April 24th, 1547, at Mühlberg, and captured their leaders, including Elector John Frederic of Saxony. He now stood before the whole civilized world at the height of his power. When he led the Electors of Saxony and Hesse into captivity, enjoined the Pope to reopen the Council of Trent, summoned his son Philip, Lord of the Netherlands and Viceroy of Italy, to Germany in order to assure his succession to the Imperial throne after the death of Ferdinand I,

Charles's brother, Charles raised himself to the pinnacle of an almighty autocrat.

The question may well be asked: what had become of the struggle for the Rhine? The answer is furnished by the position occupied by Charles at the Reichstag held in Augsburg shortly after the battle of Mühlberg. The German princes, territorial sovereigns though they were, saw their own colleagues treated like criminals, and irrespective of creed they revolted against the Imperial despotism. The Pope regarded with alarm the growth of Charles's power, fearing lest the days of the Hohenstaufens should return. The Austrian Habsburgs, at their head Ferdinand I, who had already been elected to the German throne, suspected the Spanish branch of wishing to eliminate them. The Netherlands lay crushed under Alba's heel. England, France, Denmark considered the rise of the Spanish Habsburgs to be a menace to their own interests. And even Turkey commenced warlike preparations.

Thus everything combined to undermine Charles's exalted position and check the expansion of the Spanish Habsburgs. The scene shifted overnight. Charles's political inconstancy and boundless ambition proved his undoing on the morrow of his greatest triumph. Maurice of Saxony, on whom the Emperor had conferred the Electorate after John Frederic's deposition, deserted the Imperial cause and joined the Protestants. Two years after Mühlberg Charles found himself confronted by an alliance of German princes, who, under Maurice of Saxony's leadership, took the field against their Emperor and summoned the King of France to the Rhine.

These German princes proclaimed Henry II of France "Protector of German Liberties," and concluded with him an offensive pact against Charles, in which they conceded King Henry the right to occupy Cambrai, Toul, Metz, and Verdun without delay, and to administer these towns in his capacity as Vicar of the Holy Roman Empire. Hence they surrendered without hesitation German territory to the French Crown.

The German princes went further still. They undertook to support the French Crown's claims to hereditary possession of Franche Comté, Flanders, and Artois, and gave the solemn

assurance to elect no Emperor who should not be agreeable to his Most Christian Majesty.

Hostilities commenced. Whilst Maurice of Saxony advanced against the Emperor, the Duc de Montmorency, Constable of France, entered Lorraine and besieged Metz. A century after Charles VII and Louis XI, the French advance on the Rhine assumed a more menacing aspect than ever before.

On April 15th, 1552, King Henry II of France, the irreconcilable enemy of Protestant heresy at home, crossed the frontier of Lorraine and beleaguered Toul. He came as "defender of German liberties," and as the Holy Roman Empire's Vicar by the grace of Maurice of Saxony. Metz refused to open its gates to the Constable, but French partisans within the fortress finally induced the authorities to admit Montmorency with his bodyguard for the purpose of negotiations. Montmorency seized the opportunity thus afforded him of breaking into the town at the head of a number of picked troops, and disarming the garrison. After the fall of Metz and Toul, Verdun likewise surrendered, and Henry II made a triumphant entry there. Wherever he went he proclaimed that he merely came to administer the country on the Empire's behalf. Having secured possession of the fortresses on the Moselle and the Meuse, he proceeded to advance on the Rhine in the direction of Strasbourg. He hoped that the latter city, which Charles had severely chastised for its attachment to the new doctrines, would voluntary surrender to the French, for in this case Henry was assured of the mastery of the Rhine. But Strasbourg retained its allegiance to the Emperor. Vainly did Montmorency endeavour to renew the manœuvre which proved so successful at Metz. In view of Strasbourg's resistance Henry II decided to retreat on Metz and Toul.

Meanwhile Charles V, driven by Maurice of Saxony from Innsbruck, made peace with that prince. He set the Electors of Saxony and Hesse at liberty in exchange for Maurice of Saxony's undertaking to assist the Emperor against the Turks. Having regained his freedom of action in this quarter, Charles advanced on Metz, hoping to retake the fortress from the French. But he came at an unfavourable season of the year, and after large numbers of his troops had perished of cold

and privations he saw himself compelled to raise the siege. A few years later France transformed of her own authority her protectorate over Toul, Verdun, and Metz into a definite annexation. The towns were lost to Germany, the bishoprics soon followed suit. The continuity of the western half of the Rhine basin was interrupted at its central point. French troops had crossed the Moselle and now stood facing eastwards on the plateau of Lorraine.

When Charles V abdicated in 1556 and retired to the solitude of San Juste, the House of Habsburg divided its power between its Austrian and Spanish branches. Philip II, who inherited the Spanish dominions, found the Low Countries menaced alike from within and without. At home arose the Party of Independence, born of the Reformation, and on the country's borders stood the French, who were now advancing over the Scheldt and the Sambre. The inevitable collision between Spaniards and French soon occurred. Philip II fought his French adversaries both in Italy and Picardy. In Italy he held his own with difficulty, but events proved more propitious for him in the North. In 1557 Duke Philibert of Savoy, Philip's generalissimo, inflicted a decisive defeat on the French under Constable de Montmorency at St. Quentin. In 1559 the war came to an end with the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, whereby France again renounced her claims in Italy in order to maintain her positions in the North; England lost Calais; and Duke Philibert of Savoy was reinstated in his possessions, from which the French had driven him. In 1564 the victor of St. Quentin concluded with Berne and the Swiss Confederation a treaty at Lausanne, in consequence of which the shores of Lake Leman were confided to reliable hands.

At the same time the Low Countries, which formed the chief part of Charles the Bold's Burgundian heritage, commenced their war of independence against Spain. Just as at the close of the fifteenth century the inhabitants of those territories situated at the Rhine's source had shaken off the yoke of foreign domination and resolutely set themselves their own national aims, so now also the Dutch, guardians of the river's estuary, strove to assert their nationality, with all that such an assertion implied.

The war of independence in the Low Countries ended

with the victory of the Germanic elements in the northern provinces. These elements erected on the Rhine's estuary a State destined to rise to greatness and play an important part in European history. Conscious alike of its strength and its interests, the Dutch State resolutely faced westwards in order to defend its independence. But the burgesses of Holland were not less aware of the importance of sea power, which alone could enable them to conquer their share of the world's riches.

Thus a century after the Swiss wrung from a reluctant Emperor the recognition of their independence, both source and estuary of the Rhine had become centres of Germanic power standing to each other in the relationship of flanking positions. As such they seemed destined to render impossible any envelopment of the Rhine valley by an assailant advancing from the West. Maastricht and Bâle formed the respective limits of this vulnerable front. At that time Spain still held Maastricht, whilst Bâle belonged to the Swiss Confederation. Whenever France resumed the advance brought to a standstill on the plateau of Lorraine in 1552, she would necessarily be compelled to take these conditions into consideration.

But Holland's position differed essentially from that of Switzerland. The latter was much farther removed from the struggle for the Rhine than Holland. France had a vital interest in maintaining Switzerland's neutrality, since that country not only furnished his Most Christian Majesty with his best troops, but also neutralized the Alpine passes and secured the Rhône flank. Germany's interest was not less vital, since, in her case, Switzerland covered the Southern Black Forest, the Hegau, the passes of Vorarlberg and Grisons. Hence the flanking position occupied by Switzerland in regard alike to France and Germany served in an equal degree the safety of both.

Otherwise with Holland. She lacked the natural and political protection afforded by high mountain chains and found herself exposed to attacks from all sides—from the sea in the West and North, from land in the South and East. Under these circumstances her existence as an independent State depended from the outset on the European balance of power, the conditions of which were considerably modified

on the threshold of the seventeenth century by the intimate blending of religious and political aims.

The State which first succeeded in putting an end to religious strife within its borders necessarily enjoyed a marked advantage in the struggle for supremacy. And that State was France. Hence whenever France found herself in a position to resume her expansionist policy, the danger for the Rhine could not fail to arise anew. After the death of Henry III, last scion of the House of Valois, France rapidly concentrated her forces. Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, who had been victorious over the League at Coutras and Ivry, ascended the French throne as Henry IV, and proved a worthy successor of the *grande lignée* of French monarchs. As such he united the nation's strength for the realization of a great twofold aim—the war against Spain and the struggle for the Rhine. Like his predecessors, he knew how to adapt French foreign policy to changing circumstances, whilst invariably adhering to its traditional objects. Having consolidated his power by the Peace of Vervins and the Edict of Nantes in 1598, he could afford to challenge Germany to mortal combat for possession of the Rhine. Both source and estuary of that river had now been withdrawn as political and strategic factors from the historic conflict. But since the Upper Rhenish plain could easily be invaded from the plateau of Lorraine, and since the Lower Rhine formed a convenient basis for intervening in Germany's internal feuds, French imperialism soon found an opportunity to renew its time-honoured methods.

The chief danger-zone lay in the small and weak Duchy of Lorraine, wedged-in between the Moselle, the Seille, and the Vosges. The fortresses of Metz, Toul, and Verdun had been transformed into French sally-ports, where, ever since Charles V's abdication, French troops stood ready to march. Alsace became a frontier land.

Ever since the division of the Low Countries into two distinct parts, one being an outpost of the Spanish Empire and the other constituting the Dutch Republic, the Rhenish Electors found themselves in an exposed position. The points of friction became more numerous, and dark clouds hung threateningly over the Lower Rhine. When John William, Duke of Jülich-Cleve, the last male

descendant of William the Rich, died in 1609, the outbreak of hostilities seemed imminent. The dispute concerning the succession to Jülich-Cleve cast its shadows far beyond the basin of the Lower Rhine. It was settled by a treaty which explicitly united Holland, England, and France against the House of Habsburg's attempt to establish the rule of a younger branch on the Lower Rhine, and which implicitly covered France's advance towards that river.

Henry IV's premature death in May 1610 at the hands of an assassin prevented the projected advance at the last moment. The great Minister Sully remained alone with his plans and without support.

In 1618 that tremendous struggle, which, having its origin in the *débris* of the peace of Augsburg between German Catholics and Protestants, carried devastation far and wide during thirty years, transformed Germany into a vast battleground of varying nations, and finally led to France's triumph on the Rhine, broke-out in Bohemia.

The outbreak of hostilities there found France unprepared to take part in a conflict, the possible extension of which could not be foreseen. She was herself in the throes of civil strife, due to the hatred excited by Concini, the Italian lover of Mary of Medici, widow of Henry IV and mother of Louis XIII. The infuriated Parisians hewed the adventurer to pieces, and Louis XIII sat uneasily on his throne. Seventeen years elapsed before French troops appeared on the theatre of the Thirty Years War, but already in 1629 French diplomacy intervened decisively in the great struggle, with a view to clearing the road for an ulterior advance on the Rhine, the banks of which had been invaded by the horrors of war as early as 1621.

After the severe defeat of Frederic V, Elector of the Palatinate, whom Bohemia chose for her King, on November 18th, 1620, at the White Hill before the gates of Prague, the wave of battle flowed rapidly towards the Rhine. We now arrive at an important date in the struggle for that river, considered from a strategic point of view. For the war now carried into the Upper Rhenish plain was not destined to leave it again for many centuries.

Since the days of the Emperor Valentinian the Rhine had not been the theatre of a great war, nor the scene of a campaign

on a really large scale. The encounters which since then had taken place on its banks were never the fruit of any vastly conceived plan. Not until the Thirty Years War did the struggle for the Rhine begin to be concentrated on the Rhine itself. And yet, had the warriors of old resuscitated, they would have found nothing changed, for the ancient military and geographical conditions remained intact. Those strategic laws, the working of which can be discerned already at the earliest dawn of history, which had been applied by the Romans in their campaigns against Arioistus and the Gauls, by Julius Cæsar when he linked-up Rhine and Rhône, by Drusus when pursuing Germanic tribes on the Weser and the Main and the Elbe—those laws still retained all their validity in the seventeenth Christian century.

The campaign carried in the fall of 1621 from the Moldava to the Rhine opened the series of great campaigns organized ever since in the course of the struggle for the river—campaigns which have continued up to the present day, and the end of which we cannot yet foresee.

Elector Frederic V capitulated after a desperate resistance. He lost his Electorate, which Emperor Ferdinand I bestowed on Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, who likewise received the Palatinate (1622). Ferdinand II, who succeeded his father in the following year, adopted a policy tempered by no counsels of moderation. He redeemed the town of Hüningen, on the Upper Rhine, which had been pledged to Bâle; Selestat, Colmar, Hagenau, Münster were forcibly reconverted to Catholicism; and he caused his own son Leopold William, though still a boy, to be consecrated Bishop of Strasbourg and Abbot of Murbach. He thus reconstructed the House of Habsburg's patrimony on the Upper Rhine, whilst simultaneously suppressing revolt in his Austrian domains.

The increase of Ferdinand II's power reacted on Spain's position. The internal equilibrium existing in the Holy Roman Empire since 1552 came to an end; and the strength of the Habsburgs, alike in Spain and Austria, accrued so greatly as to imperil that "European equilibrium" which formed the basis of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, and had been consolidated by the Armada's destruction and Holland's emancipation. The break-up of the political system prevailing in Europe led to a continuation of the pitiless

war which ravaged Germany's soil and decimated her population.

The Thirty Years War entered on its second phase when the North German States united in 1625 under the leadership of King Christian IV of Denmark to check the further expansion of the Imperial power. The new alliance enjoyed the active support of the Dutch States General, England, and France. Religious antagonisms, it is true, still occupied the foremost place in this new phase of the struggle; but we can nevertheless see in the background those vast political problems becoming more and more clearly outlined, which were destined to finally transform the war into a European conflict of unprecedented dimensions.

Disaster soon overtook Christian of Denmark, who capitulated in 1629 on condition that his crown and country be restored him, and that he should abstain in future from all interference in Germany's affairs. Wallenstein, Ferdinand II's Commander-in-Chief, exercised, at the head of 100,000 troops, dictatorial powers from the Danube to the Baltic. The might of the House of Austria appeared as impregnable as it was incomparable. But appearances are apt to prove deceptive. As a matter of fact storms were everywhere brewing. From an internal German feud born of religious dissensions, the war evolved into a European problem.

The responsibility for the reverses of fortune which shook to its foundations the artificial, and consequently fragile, edifice erected by the Austrian Habsburgs, rests on Ferdinand II. The Edict of Restitution, which deprived the Protestants of all ecclesiastical property acquired by them since the religious peace of Augsburg and elevated Wallenstein to the dignity of Duke of Mecklenburg, aroused bitter opposition in the whole of Germany. And when the Emperor, in view of the determined attitude taken by the Assembly of Princes at Regensburg, which energetically demanded Wallenstein's dismissal, callously "dropped" his Commander-in-Chief, he effectively undermined his own position.

In the ensuing development of the conflict into a European war, the parts played respectively by those foreign nations which judged the moment favourable for intervention were dissimilar. The seafaring Powers, Holland and England,

attacked Spain; Sweden's King landed his forces on the Pomeranian coast; whilst France inaugurated a new phase in her struggle for the Rhine. Cardinal Richelieu and King Gustave Adolph of Sweden appeared on the stage, the latter as champion of Protestantism and conqueror of the Baltic, the former as protagonist of France and conqueror of Alsace. Both were equally desirous of securing a footing in Germany, of occupying a predominant place among the German Electors. And the most dangerous of the two was not the Swede, but the Frenchman.

France successfully overcame the crisis into which Henry IV's assassination, Mary of Medici's intrigues, and Louis XIII's weakness had plunged her. Richelieu adduced the outward and visible proof of her recovery when he placed in his royal master's hands a treatise setting forth the immediate aims of French foreign policy. These consisted, according to him, in fortifying Metz as strongly as possible and then discreetly advancing, under cover of its protection, towards the Rhine in order to gain access into Germany. "Il faut," wrote the Cardinal, "s'avancer jusques à Strasbourg, s'il est possible, pour acquérir une entrée en Allemagne, ce qu'il faut faire avec beaucoup de temps, grande discrétion, et une douce et couverte conduite."

When Father Joseph, Richelieu's confidential agent, arrived in Germany to carry on propaganda on his master's behalf among the Electors of either confession against the choice of Ferdinand III as future Emperor, and to stir them up against "the devastator and upstart" Wallenstein, the outlines of the game played by France became visible. With Richelieu at its helm, the French ship of State had once more a clear course before it. Richelieu controlled both home and foreign policy, and blended them harmoniously in a carefully planned political system which left nothing to chance. He became Minister in 1624, and when, a year later, Louis XIII's sister Henriette married King Charles I of England, Richelieu rejoiced at the prospect of obtaining by means of this union the support alike of England's fleet and of England's Dutch allies. Seeing the Holy Roman Empire involved in a war which threatened to dissolve its structure, he prepared to intervene in the struggle no matter what the enigmatical deity called luck might have in store. He therefore proceeded

to spin, with the calm begotten of superiority, the threads of a policy at once strong and intricate. And ere long he took action.

Whilst the Thirty Years War between Catholics and Protestants continued to rage in Germany with unabated fury, Richelieu set to work quietly to build up a French Navy. It was the first time that France resolutely turned her attention to the sea. In the same year (1629) Ferdinand II promulgated the Edict of Restitution. Richelieu judged that the moment for action had arrived.

The renewed struggle between France and Austria became, in Richelieu's skilful hands, an instrument for systematically furthering France's expansion and her policy of penetration into Germany. The fight for the Rhine assumes a new aspect ; but a closer scrutiny reveals the fact that France henceforth no longer waged the struggle with the aim of merely dominating the Rhenish frontier. Henceforth her plans are more ambitious ; she covets the possession of the Rhine in order to make it her base of operations against Germany.

In 1632 a French Crown lawyer, Jacques de Cassan, published a memorandum which deserves to be read in conjunction with Richelieu's aforementioned treatise, and which exposes France's claim to the entire Carolingian Empire. France's lust of expansion grew apace with the attainability of her imperialist aims. Her policy was not limited by the Rhine ; it based on the various centres of gravity of a system conceived as universally valid and everywhere applicable. This system had itself been derived from France's struggle against Spanish and Austrian hegemony. Richelieu's treatise, drawing attention to the Rhine, likewise contained another fundamental idea—namely, that France should manœuvre in such a way as to leave all those States menaced by the increasing power of Spain and Austria no alternative but to become France's clients ; and, further, that in order to secure a lasting influence in such States, France should occupy fortified places on or near their frontiers, so as to be able to enter their territory at any time.

In the year 1630 the first fruits of this policy ripened to maturity in Italy, far from the Rhine, it is true, but in such a way as to give observers a foretaste of the line of action which France contemplated taking in the latter region. The

last scion of the House of Gonzaga died in 1627, leaving the principality of Mantua-Montferrat, which defended the passes of the Maritime Alps, bereft of a sovereign. The Dukes of Savoy and Nevers both claimed Gonzaga's heritage, and France promptly espoused the cause of Nevers. The Duke of Savoy applied to Austria for help. Imperial troops captured Mantua, but a French Army defeated the Savoyards and wrested Montferrat from the Duchy. The important strategic points of Casale and Pignerol passed into French hands. When Richelieu, who had gone himself to the theatre of hostilities, returned in 1631 to Paris, France found herself in possession of the entrance-gates to Piedmont. Henceforth Lille, Metz, and Casale became the strategic sally-ports of French policy.

In the same year Gustave Adolph of Sweden decisively defeated an Imperial Army under Tilly at Breitenfeld, near Leipzig. The Swedish King's victory changed the entire aspect of affairs. The North German Protestants, long crushed under an iron despotism, raised their heads. Unfortunately for Germany, Gustave Adolph's triumph likewise cleared the road for a foreign invader into the heart of the Empire. Continuing his march by way of Würzburg, Aschaffenburg, and Frankfurt, that monarch reached Mayence, which, although valiantly defended by Spanish troops, capitulated on December 13th. The Swedish invaders now stood on the Rhine.

Richelieu felt that his hour had come. Hitherto he had refrained from declaring war on the Empire, and had contented himself with signing in 1631 a pact with Sweden, the terms of which only obliged him to furnish the latter with subsidies. But when Gustave Adolph occupied Mayence, Richelieu abandoned his reserve. The Electors of Mayence and Treves, seeing their respective States threatened with total ruin, were both anxious to extricate themselves from a devastating and apparently endless war. They requested Richelieu's mediation. The Emperor Ferdinand II agreed to recognize their neutrality, and Richelieu, conformably with their wish, took them under France's protection. French troops proceeded to occupy the fortresses of Coblenz and Ehrenbreitstein, and the town of Treves.

The Swedes' advance in Alsace led to a desperate race

between them and their French allies. The former drove the Imperial and Lotharingian troops before them towards the South. The Estates, in despair, appealed to France to save them from the Swedes. She readily responded, and her troops marched without firing a shot into the Upper Rhenish plain. Richelieu gave strict instructions to avoid all hostile acts. He was satisfied to leave the fighting to his Swedish allies and to strengthen France's position by occupying German territory without any effort.

When, in the spring of 1632, Gustave Adolph found himself compelled to hurry eastwards, France could reap the harvest. The great advance on the Rhine began. It still assumed a peaceful character. The French avowedly came, not as enemies, but as protectors. Richelieu chose his time with rare sagacity, taking full advantage of the coincidence of strategic and political opportunities. On June 30th, 1632, Wallenstein routed the Swedish advance guard near Nuremberg and drove it back on that town, which he beleaguered at the head of 60,000 troops. Whilst Gustave Adolph and Wallenstein were thus immobilized in Bavaria, France completed her occupation of Alsace. Without firing a shot French troops took possession of one town after another, whereas the Swedish hordes carried rapine and massacre wherever they went. It was therefore not surprising that whenever the French succeeded in stealing a march on their wild allies, the former should have been welcomed as saviours. But none of the Alsatian towns occupied by the French surrendered unconditionally. None admitted Louis XIII's warriors within their walls save on condition that the occupation should be temporary and only last *jusqu'à la pacification générale*. None renounced their allegiance to the Empire or to their princes, and none forwent their liberties.

Richelieu made no difficulty in accepting these reservations. He recognized that, for the time being, France must share Alsace with the Swedes, and that under all circumstances a breach with Gustave Adolph must be avoided. He likewise understood the necessity of not exciting the suspicions of the Alsatian population. France's troops were not equal to the Swedes; and even if the latter should withdraw from the Rhine and abandon the field to the French, the latter risked defeat at the hands of the Imperials and Spaniards.

Thus, despite the auspicious inauguration of a bloodless campaign, Richelieu did not contemplate the future without uneasiness. Should Gustave Adolph prove victorious over Wallenstein, his last really great opponent, his power would overshadow that of the Cardinal. Should the Swedish King, on the other hand, be defeated and forced to retreat northwards, France would find herself face to face with a strong Austria, who would certainly not be disposed to cede Alsace without a struggle. But Gustave Adolph's death freed Richelieu from this dilemma. When the Swedish monarch fell at Lützen on November 16th, 1632, France's predominance was assured.

Two years later, on September 5th, 1634, Emperor Ferdinand II routed and decimated the Swedish Army at Nördlingen. Saxony, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, and Weimar sued for peace. Ferdinand II saw his power returning to him. The Swedes recognized that they could not maintain their conquests in the South-West of the Empire, and they accordingly transferred the territory hitherto occupied by them to the French. Just as had been the case two years previously with the Alsatian Estates, so too the Swedes confided their acquisitions to French protection "without detriment to the rights of the Empire." France thus merely held the position of a trustee. Since she was not at war with the Empire, the territories in question were not transferred to enemy hands. None the less they were handed over to a Power which, ever since the remote days of Philip Augustus, had coveted their possession, and which now found itself within easy reach of its goal.

By October 9th, 1634, most of the fortified places in Alsace had passed into Louis XIII's hands. Sure of his strength, he offered the Estates the protection of the Most Christian Monarchy. In most cases they accepted his offer, but invariably under the express condition that the arrangement should be regarded as temporary and as retaining its validity only until the conclusion of a general peace. The Imperial city of Strasbourg still persisted in its refusal to admit a French garrison within its walls.

Richelieu now felt himself strong enough to drop the mask. Leaning for support on the base of operations which he had established in Alsace and on the Rhine, he declared

war on Spain on May 19th, 1635, and allied himself openly with Sweden.

By this alliance between a Catholic and a Protestant country the war lost its character as a religious struggle, which, despite all political undercurrents, it had retained until then. It became for the German princes a struggle for their sovereignty; for the other Powers a war of conquest waged on German soil; and for France in particular a fight for supremacy in Europe—a supremacy she could be sure of gaining on the day when her flag should be unfurled along the whole length of the Rhine's banks from Maastricht to Bâle.

In 1635 France was not yet ready to take the offensive, although she, and not Spain, declared war. But two years later the banks of the Rhine resounded to the clash of arms. The Bavarian General John of Werth wrested from the French the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, which they had occupied without an effort in 1632, and advanced towards the Upper Rhine to give battle, in alliance with Charles of Lorraine, to the Duke of Weimar, who moved his forces freely to and fro between the Vosges and the Black Forest. Bernard of Weimar felt himself secure on the Upper Rhine, where he fought for the French cause, not under compulsion, but as France's secret ally. And when Richelieu's eagle eye recognized that France's military strength did not suffice to achieve victory over Spanish and German Armies steeled by well-nigh twenty years of unbroken warfare, he sought to induce Duke Bernard to come out openly on the French side. Since Bernard, on the other hand, dreamt of carving-out for himself an extensive duchy in South Germany, his interests coincided with those of Richelieu. He therefore concluded a treaty at St. Germain in 1635, under the terms of which the Landgraviate in Alsace and the Bailiwick of Hagenau, together with all the rights hitherto appertaining to the House of Austria, were ceded to the Duke of Weimar, who fought henceforth *sous l'autorité de la Majesté de France* and undertook to serve the French King *envers et contre tous*. For her part, France agreed to pay in future the wages of the Army recruited by Duke Bernard. Richelieu saw in the latter merely a French instrument, bound to place any conquests he might make at France's disposal; whereas Bernard, having

now become Landgrave in Alsace, anticipated being able to render himself master, by his own means, of the whole country. Richelieu had more reason to be satisfied with the bargain than Bernard.

On the bloodsoaked soil of the Holy Roman Empire, which had sunk to the level of a European battleground, Bernard of Weimar fought amidst the general conflagration for his own aggrandizement. France stood in the background, awaiting the moment to garner into her own granaries the harvest gleaned by him. When Brisach capitulated to him on January 7th, 1638, Bernard became master of the Upper Rhine.

Then suddenly he perceived the Cardinal's cloven hoof. By virtue of the pact of St. Germain Richelieu demanded the right to garrison Brisach with French troops. On Bernard refusing to comply with this request and entrusting the fortress to the Swiss General von Erlach the Duke of Weimar and Richelieu parted company. Since Richelieu did not feel strong enough to go to war with Bernard, the former spun out the negotiations and offered Bernard the hand of the Cardinal's niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, in marriage. But Bernard persisted in asserting his claims, and raised his eyes to the widowed Landgravine of Hesse. In his boundless ambition he even dreamt of establishing a Rhenish Kingdom. But on July 18th, 1639, he died prematurely, convinced that Richelieu had bribed the doctors to poison him. However that may be, his death came at a very opportune moment for the Cardinal. Bernard provided in his will that Alsace and the other territories conquered by him should remain in possession of the Holy Roman Empire. But the dead man's written wishes had less persuasive power than the living warrior's sword. Richelieu won over Bernard's leaderless mercenaries to his side, and this enabled him to lay hands without an effort on the lands acquired by Bernard by force of arms. The intermezzo was at an end, and the struggle for the Rhine continued its prescribed course. Richelieu had the satisfaction of presenting the Dauphin, to whom Anne of Austria, Louis XIII's consort, gave birth on September 5th, 1638, with the fortress of Brisach as a christening present.

When the great Cardinal expired four years later, France occupied a strong position on the Rhine. Louis XIII did not

long survive his illustrious Minister. Richelieu's successor lacked the genius of the creator of French autocracy; but Cardinal Mazarin none the less followed along the same lines as his predecessor, whose legendary testament he professed to admit. If Richelieu did not set French policy any new aims, he defined the method whereby the struggle for the Rhine could be harmoniously blended with the general policy of France, and conquests justified on moral grounds. Mazarin, like Richelieu, saw in France's intervention in Germany's internal affairs under the pretext of defending German liberties, "the best policy" for the French monarchy to adopt towards Austria and the Holy Roman Empire; and he acted accordingly.

Meanwhile war continued without relaxation. It had long since degenerated into an interminable series of marauding expeditions on either side, which systematically laid waste vast tracts of land, and Ferdinand III, who succeeded his headstrong father in 1637, earnestly sought for peace. France gathered no laurels on German battlefields after Bernard of Weimar's death, until the advent of Condé and Turenne at a later date. Luck proved more favourable to her on the Spanish theatre of war. Arras, in the North-West, and Perpignan, in the South-East, fell into her hands, and in 1643 Condé invaded the Low Countries to fight the Spaniards on their own soil. Although he had not yet developed into the genial master of the art of war known to later times, the surety of his judgment, combined with his fiery temperament, enabled him to gain his first victory in the open field before the passes through the Ardennes. On May 19th, 1643, he beat a Spanish Army at Rocroi. Spain's subsequent attempt to carry the war once more from the Rhine basin to the Somme, and across the Meuse into French territory, failed.

On May 27th, 1648, the Imperial troops encountered the allied French and Swedes at Zusmarshausen, near Augsburg, in the last battle of the Thirty Years War. This fearful struggle at last came to an end. Germany found a desert filled with ruins. Thousands of villages and hundreds of towns had been levelled to the ground, one-third of her inhabitants—in some regions, for instance on the Lower Rhine and in Alsace, even five-sixths—exterminated, the nation's

strength completely exhausted. The Peace of Westphalia—concluded at Münster, and in view of which pourparlers had already been opened in 1639—put an end to hostilities in 1648 and prepared the way for new catastrophes in the near future.

The Rhine basin was torn asunder. The Dutch Republic and Switzerland, *i.e.* the countries at the river's estuary and source respectively, “cut the painter” and withdrew definitely and in conformity with international law from the impotent Empire; Sweden stretched out a grasping hand towards the estuaries of those German rivers which flow into the Baltic, obtained a seat and the right to vote in the Imperial Reichstag, acquired Hither Pomerania and the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden; the King of France saw his suzerainty over Toul, Metz, and Verdun confirmed, and established himself securely on the Upper Rhine. Not Sweden, whose King had fallen on the battlefield, but France, the last Power to enter the struggle, emerged as the real victor from amidst the havoc wrought by the Thirty Years War.

The Holy Roman Empire, divided up into no fewer than 350 principalities, no longer knew anything but the shadow of a central government. Germany emerged from the Reformation era as an agglomeration of loosely connected States led by a Catholic Emperor deriving his strength from his vast dynastic possessions, but whose authority was neutralized by powerful Electors. The Peace of Westphalia hastened the process of disintegration and definitely sealed the Empire's fate as a decisive factor in European politics. Religious tolerance, the result of a compromise and of the application of the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*, fetched a high price—that of the Empire's complete political impotence.

France won the war thanks to Richelieu's skilful tactics, and the aid of her Swedish and German auxiliaries. She now stood before an astonished world as the recognized protectress of German liberty and guardian of Germany's helplessness. She had succeeded in weakening the House of Habsburg and Germany alike, in dissolving Austro-Spanish hegemony, so to speak, into its component parts. Both Austria and Spain, it is true, were still powerful States, but they no longer constituted a danger for France so long as the German Empire showed itself incapable of opposing an effective

barrier to French expansion. Here the peril menacing Germany's future development after the Peace of Westphalia clearly reveals itself.

France established her frontier on the Rhine, which Germany proved too feeble to defend once internal German dissensions had permitted the French to occupy the plateau of Lorraine.

The position of affairs in Alsace in regard to questions of law, allegiance, the relation of subject to sovereign, proved so complicated as a result of the political splitting-up of the country during centuries, that only with difficulty could new frontiers be delimited and new title-deeds of sovereignty drawn up. The entire possessions of the House of Habsburg, and also the Landgraviate in Lower Alsace, were nevertheless ceded to France in a perfectly unequivocal manner. Only the town of Mulhouse, allied to the Swiss Confederation since 1515, remained outside the French sphere. We must remember that there were also a certain number of Alsatian Estates directly under the sovereignty of the Empire and owing no allegiance to Austria. Among the Estates thus enjoying the privilege of immediacy we find the Bishops of Strasbourg and Bâle. As for the city of Strasbourg, the most powerful of all the Alsatian Reichsstände, the only town in Alsace which no enemy had ventured to attack during the whole course of the Thirty Years War, the Treaty of Westphalia did not even allude to it. Vainly did Strasbourg demand to be expressly designated in that document as a "Free Imperial City." Its fate remained veiled in obscurity, and it lay henceforth—a more solitary outpost even than Mulhouse—as last remaining German bridgehead on the Rhine's left bank.

The want of clearness in the wording of the Treaty and the complicated conditions existing in Alsace rendered it possible for a high-handed and purposeful French policy to claim, only a few years after the conclusion of peace, the whole of that country, including those territories immediately under the Empire's jurisdiction, as French property.

From a strategic point of view, France—following the example set by Julius Cæsar in days of yore—has invariably aimed at obtaining exclusive control over the Rhine. Politically, she has always striven to dominate the river's left bank, so as to be able to intervene at will in Germany's internal affairs. These two aims complete each other, and both—as

history ever since Cæsar's times shows us—necessarily lead beyond the Rhine. But if strategy and politics work hand in hand, strategy is the handmaiden and politics the taskmaster—or, if we will, strategy is the means to a political end. And already at the time of the Westphalian Treaty France had acquired the certainty that, for her, the end must be the dissolution of the German Empire into a legion of impotent States. The French never lost sight of this primordial object. On the basis of the Treaty of Westphalia they claimed the right to supervise Germany. For them the Treaty proved an inexhaustible source from which instruments to serve their political ends could be derived. Under the pretext of "protecting German liberties" they effectively helped to dismember the German Empire; and having gained control of the Rhine between Bâle and Speyer, they set to work indefatigably to obtain possession of the entire basin of the river. Like the Romans, the French were irresistibly attracted towards the Elbe. Having followed thus far the varying fortunes of the struggle for the Rhine, we are now in a position to understand that this attraction was dictated by consciousness of the fact that the Rhine basin is one and indivisible.

CHAPTER VIII

LOUIS XIV'S HEGEMONY, THE RHINE, AND THE EUROPEAN BALANCE OF POWER

The Peace of Westphalia and the "Gallic idea"—Germany as "political monstrosity"—Conditions on the Rhine—The Treaty of the Pyrenees—Brandenburg's eastern policy—Mazarin in Oliva—Louis XIV as autocrat—The Rhenish Alliance and the Peace of Westphalia—The first Dutch War—Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle—Jan de Witt—The second Dutch War—Turenne's plan of campaign—The campaign on the Lower Rhine—William of Orange—The first coalition against French hegemony—Frederic William of Brandenburg—Condé before Strasbourg—Destruction of the Rhine Bridges—Dismantlement of the fortresses in the Decapolis—Montecuccoli—Turenne at the Osning Pass—Peace of St. Germain—Turenne on the Tauber—The Allies take Bonn—The Imperial Banner—Battles of Sinzheim, Enzheim and Türkheim—Battle of Senef—Irresolute tactics—"Un pas de deux"—Turenne's death—Battle of Fehrbellin—France in the Mediterranean—Peace of Nymwegen—"Nec pluribus impar"—St. Germain-en-Laye—"La paix conquérante"—Fall of Strasbourg—Universal nature of the "reunions"—Kara Mustapha Pasha before Vienna—Louis XIV *versus* Europe—France's "policy of realizations"—Germany's desperate plight—"Mars Christianissimus"—The struggle for the Rhine as centre of world policy—Louis XIV, Genoa, and the Huguenots—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—Louis XIV as incarnation of the French State—French War Manifesto of September 24th, 1688—Battles of Ofen, Mohacz and Salankemen—French advance across the Rhine—The policy of contributions—William of Orange in England—Devastation of the Palatinate and Baden-Durlach—The critical year, 1689—Battles of the Boyne, Fleurus, Steenkirk and Cape La Hogue—Louis XIV's table service—Battle of Neerwinden—France forced to take the defensive—Fénelon's peace manifesto—Pacifism and weakness—Louis XIV succeeds in dissolving the Alliance—Peace of Ryswyk—Reparations?—France remains on the Rhine—The Spanish Succession—France's armed strength—Beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession—England and the European balance of power—From the Rhine to the Po—Prince Eugene of Savoy—Battles of Carpi and Chiari—Villeroy taken prisoner—Vendôme and Eugene—William III of England—The mastery of the seas—Marlborough and Margrave Louis of Bavaria—Villars and Tallard—The "lines of Stollhofen"—Guido of Starhemberg—The campaign in Bavaria—Elector Max Emmanuel—Battle of Höchstädt—The war in the North—Battles of Ramilie, Turin, Almansor and Oudenarde—Battle of Malplaquet—Louis XIV seeks peace—England abandons the struggle—Peace of Utrecht—The harvest yielded by the Treaty of Westphalia—France's will to power and the Rhine.

IF the Peace of Westphalia put an end to the Thirty Years War, it certainly did not restore peace to Europe. On the

contrary, it resulted in a whole series of new wars. From the very beginning it was branded with the characteristic stigma attaching to products of a Congress of European Powers, the interests of which are fundamentally and irreconcilably divergent. France's claims were not satisfied by the Treaty of Münster. "Dream and aspiration of Philip Augustus, intention and wish of Philippe-le-Bel, tradition of Henry IV"—all fell short of their integral realization in that complicated document. The "Gallic ideal" of absolute mastery over the Rhine had not been destined to attain complete fulfilment in 1648. But France's claims none the less found a favourable soil in which they could take root and ripen to maturity. The strength of those claims lay in the vagueness of the Treaty's provisions. It was inevitable that in course of time they should burst the paper envelope concealing them and emerge once more as disturbing factors into the light of day. The policy of the French Delegate Servien, who sagaciously represented the Treaty as being susceptible of the most varied interpretations, was entirely successful. He had good reasons for writing to his royal master: "Je crois qu'il se faudra contenter que chacun explique le traité comme il l'entend."

The German Reich was dissolved, abandoned to the tender mercies of hordes of disbanded soldiers whose profession consisted in pillaging and massacring, and nailed on a Procrustean bed between France in the West, Sweden in the North, Poland in the East, and Turkey in the South East. None the less did embers of life still glow faintly amidst the German chaos. Each territory strove, in the measure of its means, to become a self-determining, autonomous unit; and it is to this common aspiration that we may attribute the growth of princely power within the Empire. The formerly flourishing German townships had been destroyed by the Thirty Years War, and what was left of political power necessarily concentrated itself at the various courts. Here absolutism, alike in theory and practice, developed. The Holy Roman Empire with its 350 "fatherlands" became henceforth a mere monstrosity, and Germany, considered as a political factor, was eliminated from a world in which no room existed any longer for States whose inhabitants were devoid of national feeling. Only those parts of the Reich, which, amidst the

anarchical struggle of all against all, still possessed sufficient strength to pursue an independent policy and to assert and maintain—albeit within narrow limits—their sovereign rights thanks to a military organization, could look forward to a future.

The larger ones among the component States of the Reich survived the titanic struggle, but at the expense of a great diminution of power. The Electorate of Bavaria could alone boast of a tolerably successful record, since Maximilian had been lucky enough, amidst the varying fortunes of war, to save both his Electoral title and the Upper Palatinate. The House of Wittelsbach found itself securely seated in Munich, Neuburg, and the Archbishopric of Cologne. The Rhenish Palatinate, which had been awarded, together with the newly created eighth Electorate, to the son of Frederic V,¹ lay exposed as borderland to the standing menace of French guns. Saxony, who had acquired Lusatia and Magdeburg, was forced into Austria's orbit, and began to concentrate her attention on Eastern Europe. When Frederic William's attempt to modify the Treaty of Xanthen to Brandenburg's advantage failed in 1651 owing to the combined opposition of Kaiser, Spain, and Poland; and, as a result, the Palatinate successfully asserted its claim to the possession of Jülich-Berg; the attention of Brandenburgian statesmen was likewise diverted from the Rhine towards the Vistula. Cleves, being a *disjectum membrum* of the House of Hohenzollern, had no share either in the growth of Brandenburg's power, or in the far-reaching aims of the great ruler to whom the sandy soil of the March gave birth later on. This fact has exerted marked influence on the struggle for the Rhine.

The outbreak of internal disorders in France, the main element of which was again La Fronde, proved in no wise detrimental to that country's victory. Mazarin, it is true, was obliged to abandon Anne of Austria, the Queen-Mother, and to seek refuge in Liège and Cologne; before long, however, he returned in triumph to Paris, the efforts to create a cleavage within the Fronde having meanwhile proved successful, and Turenne having been won over to the Court. When the Car-

¹ Popularly known as "der Winterkönig," because his reign as King of Bohemia lasted only for the brief space of the winter months 1619-20. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

dinal took over anew the reins of power in 1653, France had fully recovered her strength, and the effects of this recovery became immediately visible in her foreign policy. In 1659 Spain was compelled for the first time in her history to conclude a humiliating peace. She lost all her transpyrenean territories, also Artois and parts of Flanders, the Hainaut and Luxemburg. The northern frontiers of France were advanced beyond their second natural circumvallation, the gate of the Scheldt and the breach formed by the Meuse were closed. Arras, Hesdin, Gravelines, Landrecie, Le Quesnoy, Marienburg, and Phillipenville, hitherto Spanish fortresses, were transformed into French sally-ports. France consolidated her position on the Lorraine plateau by the acquisition of Stenay and Clermont, important crossing-points over the Meuse, and by the dismantling of the fortress of Nancy. Duke Charles returned to a defenceless and mutilated country.

The strategic flanking position acquired by France in the region where Scheldt and Sambre take their rise, together with the base of operations obtained by her on the Lorraine plateau, guaranteed her superiority in case of wars of aggression, and enabled her to wage war simultaneously in the North and East. The natural fortress formed by France was thus strengthened rapidly, year by year, in view of the coming decisive struggle for possession of the Rhine. Spain not only lost—with the exception of Franche Comté and the Southern Netherlands—the entire inheritance of Charles the Bold, but also her maritime supremacy. In Italy alone did she retain her ascendancy. The Spanish Century was at an end. The French Century dawned.

The Treaty of the Pyrenees constituted Mazarin's personal work. It was crowned by the marriage of Louis XIV with Maria Theresa, the daughter of Philip IV of Spain; and Mazarin himself described this union as the "highest prize of peace." French political greatness reached its pinnacle in 1648, when Mazarin made overtures to England, who one year later beheaded her King and accepted Cromwell's iron yoke.

Cardinal Mazarin was fully aware of this favourable situation when Sweden, apparently bent on uncalled-for deeds of heroism, let loose, without being provoked, after the death of Oxenstierna, the Furies of the so-called Northern War. Charles, Duke of the Palatinate and Zweibrücken, who ascended

the throne of Sweden in 1654 after the renunciation of Christina, only daughter and sole heiress of Gustave Adolph, immediately declared war on Poland, and then proceeded to attack simultaneously Denmark and Moscovia, with the intention of gaining the mastery over the Baltic. Charles X, nephew of Gustave Adolph, in whose veins pulsated the blood of the Wittelsbachs, became champion of Swedish expansion. In 1655 he led his army across the Baltic, defeated the Polish Army—composed exclusively of noblemen—before the walls of Warsaw, and entered Cracow in triumph. John Casimir fled to Lemberg. The entire eastern frontier of Germany seemed in danger of being encompassed by the Swedes. This fact sufficed to rouse those Powers in whose interest it lay that the Baltic should remain free. Brandenburg, who under the terms of the Peace of Westphalia had been excluded from all access to the sea, and who, owing to the weakness of the attitude adopted by her representatives during the Münster Congress, had been entirely disregarded, suddenly recovered the momentarily lost consciousness of her strength. Elector Frederic William offered an alliance to Holland and England, and sought to assure himself of Austria's support. But the negotiations lagged behind events, and Emperor Ferdinand III was anxious to avoid war. Frederic William therefore undertook to risk the consequences, and marched with a small Army into West Prussia. Here, however, he saw himself forced by the Swedes to fall back on the fortress of Königsberg.

The first campaign which a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire dared to wage in his capacity of Sovereign since the Peace of Westphalia, thus ended unfavourably for the German cause. Brandenburg was compelled by Sweden, then a Great Power, to accept the Duchy of Prussia as a fief from the Swedish Crown, together with corresponding feudal duties towards Charles X.

The Swedish monarch needed his vassal sooner than he anticipated. The Poles rose to arms, and the Swedes found themselves confronted by a Polish *levée en masse*. The Polish Army, numbering 80,000 men, was massed before the walls of Warsaw. The cause of Charles X appeared irretrievably lost. In this extremity the Hohenzollern performed more than his oath of fealty required of him. During three days,

from July 28th to July 30th, 1658, Swedes and Brandenburgians waged a desperate struggle against a foe five times superior in numbers. The power of resistance of the Poles was finally broken by their adversaries' firing squares. The Polish legions were dispersed and the Brandenburgian troops took Praga by storm.

The Battle of Praga shed a first ray of light on the Holy Roman Empire, sunk into apparently impenetrable obscurity. Guided by a strong and statesmanlike hand, Brandenburg rose, ten years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Münster, from amidst the prevailing German chaos, as the first German State capable of independent action.

Elector Frederic William seized the opportunity afforded him to get dispensed by Charles X from the former's oath of fealty. Shortly afterwards he also severed his alliance with Sweden by concluding at Wehlau a pact of peace and friendship with Poland, taking advantage at the same time of this treaty to get rid of his feudal obligations towards Warsaw. The Elector of Brandenburg, in his capacity of Duke of Prussia, thus acquired absolute sovereignty over the German Marches in the East. Charles X, on the other hand, seeing himself menaced by an alliance between Austria, Russia, Denmark, and Brandenburg, turned his arms against the Danes. The war incontestably bore further testimony to Sweden's warlike strength, but general exhaustion and the intervention of England and the Netherlands put a speedy end to the bloodshed. A new European Congress assembled in Copenhagen and Oliva, with the object of settling all questions concerning the Baltic and determining the frontiers of the countries bordered by it.

At the Congress of Oliva France clearly manifested her power to the whole world. Mazarin played there the part of arbitrator of Europe. In the name of France he awarded Pomerania to Sweden, to whom that province had already been attributed by the Treaty of Westphalia. The Cardinal likewise admitted the claim of Charles X to the possession of Livonia and Estonia. Three Polish districts constituted Brandenburg's share of the spoil.

When Mazarin died in 1661, France had already ascended to the rank of foremost Continental Power. She appeared as defender and guarantor of the Peace of Westphalia and

as a protector of the weak. France—designedly described by French historians as “Kingdom of the Gauls”—extended her boundaries in three directions. Firstly, from the Pyrenees to beyond the Rhône; secondly, from the Mediterranean to the gate of the Scheldt; thirdly, from the Atlantic to the Upper Rhine. Satiated with military glory, strong in the consciousness of her acquired homogeneity, France found herself in the best possible position to pave the way for the conquest of the Rhine and the establishment of her domination beyond the Alps. It was the triumph of a policy which had been methodically concealed. Not with barefaced cynicism did France stride from one conquest to another. On the contrary, legal contentions, masterpieces of dialectical skill, ingeniously based on historical reminiscences and appeals to venerable traditions, were invariably advanced each time a further step forward was taken, and these pleadings were cleverly interwoven with the yet more convincing argument furnished by hard cash. The French did not occupy the banks of the Upper Rhine as conquerors, but as protectors. Being anxious to avoid appearing as destroyers of the Holy Roman Empire, they promptly slipped into the skin of the Habsburgs, so that an onlooker might take them for citizens of the Reich. Not until the sally-ports of Brisach and Philippsburg fell into their hands, thus placing Lorraine at their mercy, did they shed their disguise.

Interpreting the Treaty of Westphalia after her own fashion, France now began to lay violent hands on the last remnants of German soil in Alsace. She stretched out a grasping hand towards the Lower Rhine, and attacked simultaneously the States General and Franche Comté with the object of obtaining possession of the whole of that river and the province of the Doubs. Nevertheless, notwithstanding this transition to a policy of naked violence, French statesmen still devoted their efforts to discovering subtle legal sophistries destined to prepare the way diplomatically for their intended conquests and to justify them politically.

But a policy of these dimensions, which flung the gauntlet in the face of Europe, needed a more prominent and representative figure than that of a mere Minister to impersonate it. For this purpose the majesty of a Monarch was indispensable. To France Destiny gave such a monarch in the person of the

child to whom, in 1639, Richelieu presented Brisach as a slightly overdue christening gift.

Louis XIV appeared on the stage which had been duly swept and decorated by Richelieu and Mazarin in view of the reception of an Autocrat. In his dazzling, self-centred personality Louis incorporated the craving for expansion, the will to power, and the unquenchable thirst for glory, so eminently characteristic of the French nation. The national instinct of domination was combined, in the *Roi Soleil*, with dynastic interest and the imperious will of a haughty and tyrannical nature; the result being to develop the innate political genius of France, under a centralized and absolutist *régime*, to an extent such as to render it capable of the vastest achievements. Germany's impotence not only formed an appropriate background against which the might of the French State stood out the more conspicuously in bold relief, but also afforded a welcome object *per se* for the realization of France's ambitious plans.

The Rhenish Princes had already found favour in Richelieu's eyes. They were all the more eager, once the Treaty of Westphalia signed, to bask in the sunlight of the French Throne. They took advantage of the right, conceded to all German Confederate rulers, of concluding alliances—provided the latter were not directed against Kaiser and Reich—not only to form coalitions between themselves, but also to enter into compacts with the King of France. But if such conventions more or less effectively safeguarded their own interests, they did not safeguard the Rhine. When, in 1658, Cologne, Mayence, Treves, and Jülich concluded a "Rhenish Alliance," of which Johann Philipp von Schönborn, Elector of Mayence, was the initiator, the Rhine Basin began to be detached from the German political organism and to stand out as a distinct and separate political entity. The allies aimed at securing mutual aid and protection for themselves, but as a matter of fact they were drawn ever more and more into the orbit of France. When Louis XIV joined the Rhenish Alliance the very day after its conclusion, and, thanks to the ingenuousness of the Rhenish Princes, rapidly became Uncrowned King of the new Confederacy, the latter was in imminent danger of being completely separated from all community with the rest of Germany and of degenerating into a mere

French dependency. But the adhesion of Hesse, Brunswick, and Brandenburg, by extending the territorial limits of the Confederacy and thus preventing the adoption of a separatist Rhenish policy, produced a counteractive effect.

Inner dissensions caused the dissolution of the Rhenish Alliance after only a few years had elapsed, but French statesmen were careful to keep it in good remembrance so as to be able to quote it as a precedent whenever a favourable opportunity arose. Louis XIV contented himself with concluding separate alliances and with chaining the Rhenish Princes singly to his chariot. Cologne came entirely under his influence. Count William Egon von Fürstenberg, Chancellor of the Archbishop Maximilian Henry of Bavaria, sold himself body and soul to the French King, and, together with his brothers, employed himself to furthering the latter's designs throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.

Louis's clients were not only to be found in the regions of the Lower Rhine and Moselle, but also on the Upper Rhine. In 1662 Francis Egon von Fürstenberg was appointed to the episcopal see of Strasbourg, where he henceforth served his "benefactor" as true and faithful vassal.

Notwithstanding the desertion of individual potentates and the venality of their hangers-on, the Rhineland population in general gave no sign of becoming less German in its manner of feeling and thinking. When Louis XIV proclaimed himself Absolute Monarch, and by virtue of his unbounded authority inaugurated a policy of aggression all along the line, the Rhinelanders were still fully conscious of their German nationality and by no means inclined to abandon it. The "Imperial Free Towns" (*Reichsstädte*) in Alsace sent representatives to the Imperial Diet, did homage to Emperor Leopold I on the death of Ferdinand III, and regarded themselves as integral component parts of the Holy Roman Empire. On their coins, which bore the inscription *libera civitas imperialis*, could be seen the arms and names of the German Emperors. The Imperial Court of Appeal was still their supreme court of judicature, their walls were still defended by their own troops, their arsenals still replete with their own munitions. The only authority exercised by Louis XIV was that of Bailiff of the Decapolis, a right conceded him at Austria's expense by the Treaty of Westphalia. The

towns refused to take the oath to French officials until a formula had been discovered, to which, conscious of their weakness, they could no longer offer any objection; and not until 1662 did they consent to have this oath administered to them at Hagenau. When Duke Armand de Mazarin, the Cardinal's nephew and King's Bailiff, travelled in 1664 from town to town with great pomp, and accompanied by a military escort, in order to inspect the arsenals, Colmar and Münster refused to admit him. Both towns, moreover, instead of promising his French Majesty's representative obedience (*obéissance*) as requested, contented themselves with assuring him of their loyal attachment (*dévotion*). In 1664 the authorities of Sélestat still bound themselves "to remain faithful solely and exclusively to his Imperial Roman Majesty."

In 1671 a decision of the Reichstag, to which the Decapolis appealed as arbitrator, declared the French King's sovereignty to be strictly limited to his functions as Bailiff and to the right of protecting the Bailiwick, and stated that he was in nowise entitled to claim sovereign authority over the towns. The French consistently ignored this decision, based on Article 87 of the Peace Treaty, and it consequently remained a dead letter.

Louis XIV had recourse to more forcible methods, and successive phases of negotiations were marked by battles. Following the advice tendered him by Servien, he carefully refrained from appealing to the Treaty of Westphalia whenever there was no concrete advantage to be gained thereby, but he unfailingly fell back on that document every time it seemed profitable to do so. Once in possession of the Alsatian glacies, and having secured the strategic line of communication between the Rhine valley and the operations base in Lorraine by constructing a military road, he proceeded to unsheathe his sword.

The first attack was, however, not directed against the Rhineland, but against the Spanish Netherlands and Franche Comté, the advanced outposts which lay in front of it. Louis's intention was to gain possession of this flanking position before pushing forward from the centre towards the Rhine. He would then be able to threaten Holland's uncovered southern flank and capture the extensive barrage established during

the Hispano-Dutch war between the Sambre and the Rhine delta, which could easily be converted into a single powerful fortified enclosure to the detriment of France.

In 1667 Louis began to move. On the death of Philip IV he invoked the *jus devolutionis*, borrowed by his legal advisers from the Flemish Code of Civil Jurisprudence, in order to assert the hereditary claims of his wife Maria Theresa to Flanders and Franche Comté, and immediately proceeded to carry the war across the frontier. The campaign was a mere parade. There were no enemy troops in the field. Undefended fortresses fell like ripe fruit into the hands of the youthful Monarch, who, together with the whole Court, accompanied his Army. The round of festivities was only interrupted to enable Louis to enter Flemish towns in triumph, like his ancestor Charles the Bold in days of yore. Charleroi, Lille, Courtrai, Douai, Oudenarde, opened their gates. Brussels and Dendermonde held out.

England, Holland, and Sweden, seriously alarmed by the rapid development of the French King's power, resolved to take action to check its further growth. But the sword had accomplished its work ere their alliance could be completed. In February 1668 Condé invaded Burgundy, and in seventeen days overran the entire Franche Comté. The French were received with open arms by the inhabitants, who had long since been gallicized. Not a single town retained its allegiance to Spain. In the North a French Army stood at the Dutch frontier, another in the South-East at the Swiss border. France could afford to drive a hard bargain.

A congress resulted at Aix-la-Chapelle, at which the aforementioned Triple Alliance England-Holland-Sweden proposed to Louis that he should permanently keep part of the territory conquered by him, on condition that peace be restored. Louis smilingly accepted this curious transaction, which the Spanish Court found decidedly less to its taste. As for the Holy Roman Empire, it contemplated in impotent silence this reshifting of the balance of power on its mutilated frontier. Austria's hands were tied by the war with Turkey, and the Emperor Leopold had, moreover, been skilfully entangled by Louis in the meshes of the latter's diplomatic net. But the consternation caused by Louis's breach of the peace proved so great that the Rhenish States, filled with gloomy presentiments of

coming trouble, sought to modify the policy hitherto pursued by them. The "Rhenish Alliance" was dissolved, and the Netherlands drew up plans for their defence.

Louis XIV returned to Paris in triumph. During this short campaign, glorified by a host of sycophantic pens and brushes, the royal power manifested itself to the French nation with such incomparable splendour that the nation became instinctively conscious of the privileged position enjoyed by it among the peoples of Europe. Adverse criticism of the monarch's autocratic rule was henceforth silenced, and France could throw the whole weight of her strength into the struggle for European hegemony.

Louis knew that his incursion into Flanders had earned him the deadly enmity of Holland. We did not delay his preparations for war on a large scale, with the intention of punishing that country for its share in the formation of the aforesaid Triple Alliance. He determined to carry the war across the Dutch borders and to bring the entire Rhineland, from the Burgundian Gate to the Zuider Zee, under his influence. In 1670 he filled-up the last remaining gap in his base of operations on the Lorraine plateau by invading the Duchy and driving Charles IV into exile. French Army Corps were concentrated between Luxemburg, Metz, and Nancy, ready to push forward towards the Rhine from the centre.

Holland meanwhile was seeking alliances, but did not set herself to the task of increasing and improving her armaments with anything like the fiery zeal she displayed during the Eighty Years War of Independence. She had risen to be a great colonial Power, and in 1670 was the first trading and seafaring nation in the world, whose warships compelled the navies of Spain and Portugal and England to dip their flags. But she lacked internal cohesion. The reins of government were in the hands of Jan de Witt, who dislodged the House of Orange from its dominant position and assumed control of the country's destinies. He led Holland to victory in the first naval war with England, took the offensive against Sweden, in order to keep the Baltic open for Dutch trade, and endeavoured to protect the Republic against aggression by a policy of alternate alliances with England, France, and Sweden.

Holland was engaged in the second naval war with England

when, in 1667, Louis XIV flung himself on the Spanish Netherlands. After some serious preliminary mishaps, Admiral de Ruyter defeated the English fleet off Dunkerque and swept it from the high seas. In June 1667 Dutch warships sailed up the Thames and burnt the Arsenal of London. King Charles II, who hoped by the brilliancy of his Court to make people forget the sombre puritanism of Cromwell's era, was busy amusing himself with his mistress and flunkeys during the night in which this happened, and accepted England's humiliation with the reckless gaiety characteristic of the Stuarts. But despite the strength put forth by her at this epoch, Holland not only suffered from the effects of the antagonism between De Witt and the House of Orange, but also from moral infirmities. The spirit of the old *gueux* still survived at sea, but at home the wealthy classes had become addicted to pleasure-seeking and luxurious living. The country acquired great riches too rapidly; its capacity for sacrifice diminished, and national ideals lost their power of attraction in the measure that prosperity increased. The States General devoted their attention too exclusively to furthering material interests, and their policy was dictated by one-sided considerations of this nature. Nevertheless Jan de Witt, although he shared the prevailing materialist point of view and never rose beyond a purely economic conception of the State, was able to stand up successfully to Louis XIV. He was the soul of the coalition formed against the French King, and in 1667 he concluded a Peace Treaty with England at Breda in order to regain his freedom of action. Holland abandoned the war on sea in the hope of putting a stop at Aix-la-Chapelle to the French monarch's further progress.

Louis XIV made no objection to surrendering Franche Comté and part of his conquests in Flanders. He willingly relinquished the less important booty and contented himself with retaining possession of those fortresses which he needed for the purpose of a future campaign against Holland, on whom he determined to inflict condign punishment. Whilst Holland, trusting to her alliances and her fleet, was absorbed in the furtherance of her commercial expansion and omitted either to raise an Army or to supply her citadels with the requisite means of defence, Louis busily entered into secret compacts

which assured him of the Emperor Leopold's neutrality, of Sweden's and Denmark's sympathy, and of the active support of England and the Rhenish States. He came to an agreement with the Emperor concerning the partition of the Spanish hereditary patrimony, for which in all probability the latter would not have to wait long, and thus succeeded in inducing Leopold I to keep aloof from any war not waged against the Empire or Spain. He won over Charles II of England by bribery, rendered the northern monarchies tractable with the help of subsidies, and got the "Egonites" ¹ to throw open the frontiers of the Electorate of Cologne. The Rhenish Confederation was no more, but Cologne's subservience sufficed to place the key to the strategic position in Louis's hands.

Once the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster went a step further and proffered their armed assistance, no valid reason existed any longer for postponing the outbreak of hostilities. After centuries of vicissitudes, the struggle for the Rhine became the conscious struggle of France for supremacy in Europe.

In 1672 Louis XIV's preparations for war were complete. The great predatory war, fated to dislocate the entire artificial political system of Western Europe, began with a cleverly conceived campaign on the Lower Rhine, at the close of which the main outlines of the far-reaching plan mapped-out by Turenne for his royal master's benefit became clearly visible. The realization of this plan led to a general conflagration on land and sea, and finally resulted in an atrocious devastation of the German Rhineland. It was the fourth French invasion, on a large scale, of the Rhine Basin and the ancient territories of the Holy Roman Empire, since the days when Charles VII and Louis the Dauphin penetrated with their undisciplined Armagnac hordes into the plain of the Upper Rhine.

The cunning Stuart struck the first blow. He despatched the English fleet on a predatory expedition to the Dutch coast, and then proclaimed war on the States General. Louis XIV gratefully picked-up the ball thus set rolling, declared that his honour bound him to fulfil the obligations incumbent on him

¹ William Egon and Francis Egon von Fürstenberg and their followers.
Vide p. 116. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

under the Treaty of Alliance, and dexterously veiled thereby what was in reality his own work.

The news that England had again taken up arms against Holland did not seriously alarm the latter, who fondly imagined herself to be invulnerable. Admiral de Ruyter's victorious flag still fluttered proudly at its masthead, in view of his un-beaten squadrons. Holland was still sheltered by the fortresses girding her western and south-western frontiers, exposed to enemy attacks ; her fertile plains still lay securely between the wide moats formed by Scheldt and Meuse, Issel and Rhine —protected, into the bargain, by big dikes ; mighty waves would still respond to the nation's call, should the sluices be opened and the dikes cut in order to submerge intending invaders. Holland did not perceive the danger until it was too late to bring the enemy forces concentrated on her frontier to a standstill.

Vainly did Elector Frederic William of Brandenburg endeavour to open her eyes to the serious nature of the situation, and induce her to enter into an agreement with him in respect of subsidies. The warnings of the Hohenzollern Prince, who despite Louis's threatening language persistently repelled the French King's offer of an alliance, remained long unheeded in Amsterdam. Not until 1672, when the enemy advance had already begun, did De Witt accede to the Elector's request for a subsidy, and then in niggardly fashion. But it was too late to make any adequate preparations.

The order to advance did not take the French Army by surprise. For some time past 120,000 men had been assembled on the frontier, ready for battle. Thanks to the foresight of Louvois, the Minister of War, nothing was lacking. All the magazines were replete, all the regiments in full muster. The entire aristocracy, who, like the chevaliers of old, constituted the corps of officers, took the field with alacrity.

Turenne planned to accomplish a strategic enveloping movement. Whilst his weak left wing, under the Duke of Luxemburg's command, manœuvred between Sambre and Meuse and kept the enemy busy on its south-western frontier, the centre pushed forward from the Meuse and the Moselle towards the Rhine with the object of attacking the Dutch in the flank. Turenne posted his right wing on the Lorraine plateau, with orders to keep in readiness to

cover Alsace. For the first time French Armies prepared for an attack on the Rhine all along the line. The main thrust was aimed at the Nymwegen-Deventer sector, with Amsterdam as its ultimate objective.

The French advance began in the spring. Turenne succeeded in breaking through between Visé and Maastricht, appeared quite unexpectedly before the fortresses of Wesel, Rees and Emmerich, and stood on Cologne territory, menacing the open flank of the enemy, before the latter had time to reverse its front. One night in June French cavalry, led by Condé, forced a passage across the Rhine before their Sovereign's eyes, near the Customs House adjoining the antiquated Schenken Redoubt. Louis contemplated that historic stream as it reflected the glare of torches lighting-up the road along which his victorious troops were moving. The right wing swung round towards the North, and, fired by Turenne's communicative ardour, rapidly reached the Issel. The fortresses on the Rhine and its tributary—Emmerich, Zütphen, and Deventer—lacking adequate means of defence, were unable to check the impetuous advance. Garrisons and citizens, despairing of relief, alike made overtures for surrender. Louis's German henchmen, the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster, hastened to take charge of the fallen towns. The French then swerved round in a north-westerly direction with a view to marching on Amsterdam. Everything appeared to indicate that a decisive campaign was imminent. The weak Field Army, which had been re-formed helter-skelter near Arnheim, found itself outflanked and threatened with complete envelopment, the great natural fortification formed by the Rhine delta was in the invader's hands. If Amsterdam succumbed to an attack in the rear, the war would be decided. But this seemed to be already the case, for Holland's Government was panic-stricken. The wealthy merchants fled with their treasures overseas, sedition and mutiny spread like wildfire through the streets of the capital. The heroic Dutch nation, smitten with the curse of Mammon, forgot its glorious past.

His country's dire distress caused the last scion of the House of Orange to emerge from the obscurity into which De Witt had obliged him to retire. On July 4th, 1672, William III was proclaimed Stadholder, Captain-General, and Admiral of

the Fleet. Invested with dictatorial powers, he became Head of the State and assumed supreme command of all the Forces. A youth of twenty-two arose to confront the *Roi Soleil*, and from that day on proved the latter's most formidable antagonist. By a timely retreat he averted the impending blow from the Dutch Army, and withdrew his troops from Arnheim to Utrecht. But despite his energy and determination he would have been unable to change the fortunes of war, had the enemy not afforded him the necessary leisure and space for appropriate action.

Turenne suddenly found himself left in the lurch by Louis. After capturing Arnheim he urged the King to march on Amsterdam, but Louis had changed his mind. Louvois balked the Marshall's intentions by issuing orders to stop the advance and besiege those fortresses which still held out, so that they might be laid at the feet of the monarch. The old methods prevailed over Turenne's plan of operations, the forces were scattered, valuable time was wasted, and the defender recovered his freedom of action. Schematism proved fatal to the great strategic idea. Turenne succeeded with difficulty in obtaining permission for Rochefort's cavalry corps to march on the capital. Rochefort reached Muyden, at the gates of Amsterdam, almost without striking a blow, but he arrived too late to prevent the opening of the big sluices which served to dam the waters of the Whale Stream. Orange cut the dikes, and with 13,000 men took up his position on the dams in order to defend the city. Pastures and corn-fields were flooded, and the French cavalry compelled to retreat. Rochefort fell back on Utrecht. Turenne's campaign failed at the very moment of attaining its culminating point.

Meanwhile Jan de Witt sued for peace. The Dutch magnates hoped to satisfy the French King with money, and the cession of the Generality Land and some fortresses. They reckoned on being able to retain their commercial world-supremacy at sea despite these losses, since Admiral de Ruyter still held the combined English and French fleets in check, and were therefore willing to sacrifice part of the national territory. But these pusillanimous proposals fell on deaf ears. Louis required more than was offered, whereupon an infuriated crowd of their compatriots killed Jan de Witt and his brother Cornelius. William III remained Holland's only

possible saviour. He summoned up all his strength and proclaimed the War of Liberation.

The Western world in general had by this time awakened to a sense of the danger to which France's ambitious schemes exposed Europe. Austria, Spain, and the German Princes formed a coalition with the object of restraining the French monarch's immoderate lust of power. Yielding to Parliamentary pressure, Charles II of England severed his alliance with Louis, but consented to remain neutral in exchange for a handsome grant of money.

When Louis XIV commenced his attack on Holland, Frederic William of Brandenburg exclaimed prophetically that in the judgment alike of contemporaries and of history it would appear an act of "unpardonable weakness" on the part of Europe to sacrifice the liberty, not only of Holland but also of all Christendom, by refusing to come to the former's assistance. Help was now forthcoming, but it came tardily and scantily. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the war suddenly assumed the aspect of the first great defensive struggle waged by Europe against French hegemony on the Continent.

Louis XIV did not fear the new coalition, which was lame on both feet. The Emperor Leopold joined it half-heartedly, being still in the trammels of the secret treaty concerning the Spanish heritage, and, moreover, hard pressed by the Turks, who had recovered from their defeat on the St. Gotthard and were rendering yeoman's service to the French cause. Louis feared the German Princes still less. He had won over the Palatinate to France by the marriage of his brother Philip of Orleans with Elizabeth Charlotte, daughter of the Palsgrave Charles Louis. He was likewise assured of the sympathy, or, at any rate, the benevolent neutrality of Bavaria, Hanover, and Hesse; whilst the Archbishop of Mayence knelt in rapturous devotion before his omnipotent majesty. Treves was unarmed and defenceless, Cologne entirely in his hands. French troops securely held the whole base of operations needed by Kaiser and Reich in order to wage the struggle for the Rhine on that river's banks. The French were in possession of the line Bâle-Maastricht, and not only occupied the strongly fortified bridgeheads Hüningen, Brisach, Philippsburg, Bonn, Neuss, Wesel, and Emmerich, but also a sally-port in West-

phalia which enabled them if necessary to menace the German northern flank.

But at this juncture a new antagonist, with whom Louis had not reckoned, unexpectedly entered the lists. The Elector Frederic William of Brandenburg marshalled his forces on the Weser. Mazarin had learnt to appreciate the Elector's calibre alike as soldier and statesman before the walls of Warsaw and at the Congress of Oliva. But Louis XIV, from the dizzy heights of his throne, still looked down with contempt on what he considered to be a petty prince invariably in financial straits, always seeking support, now in one quarter, now in another, whose military enterprises showed no apparent trace of any preconceived plan, who possessed a strip of land on the Rhine which was absolutely at Louis's mercy, and who now had the presumption to march behind his Red Eagles against the French. But Louis improved his acquaintance with the Brandenburgian sooner than the former could have wished. Isolated, Frederic William did not weigh heavily in the balance, but he turned the scales in the present war without even any great battle being fought. He relieved Orange from the pressure of overwhelmingly superior numbers by appearing on the Rhine and thus forcing Turenne to take up a defensive position.

Louis had possibly been influenced by political considerations when he resolved to deviate from Turenne's original plan and renounce the idea of capturing Amsterdam and annihilating the Dutch Army. The French King being no longer able to concentrate his efforts exclusively on the campaign against Holland, the war overstepped the limits originally conceived for it. Hostilities entered upon a new phase. The King-Constable divided his forces so as to be able to encounter the enemy everywhere. In this way he missed the opportunity of bringing about a tactical decision, but attained his political objects. He entrusted Marshal Luxemburg with the task of directing siege operations in Holland; Turenne received orders to cover Luxemburg's rear, and keep the Imperial and Brandenburgian troops away from the Dutch theatre of war; Condé was assigned the duty of strengthening the French positions on the Upper Rhine. In addition to these measures an expeditionary corps was dispatched against Franche Comté, whilst Admiral Duquesne had instructions

to lead the fleet into the Mediterranean and attack the Spaniards in Sicily.

Thus the war extended in space, but it lost what we may call its "dynamic tension," which nowhere on land was relieved by the bursting of a thunderstorm of elementary violence. None the less was the entire Rhine Basin, from the river's mouth to the Burgandian Gate, ablaze.

The Franco-Dutch war revealed itself as a strategic move in the general struggle for the Rhine. France obtained her first decisive success by achieving the conquest of those parts of Alsace which the Treaty of Westphalia had only awarded her conditionally. By command of Louis XIV the ramparts of the Imperial Free Towns were razed.

In 1672 Condé appeared with a powerful Army before the Saverne Gate. As soon as the Imperials began to concentrate at the Mein Gate, he gave orders that all crossings over the Rhine not protected by French bridgeheads should be destroyed. This order had in view, in the first instance, the large wooden bridge that spanned the river between Strasbourg and Kehl, and linked up the former town with its Badenese hinterland. The bridge was neutral territory and not under French suzerainty, but Condé knew only his duty as a soldier and caused it to be set on fire. The watchman on the cathedral tower blew his horn, tocsins sounded the alarm; the citizens loudly demanded arms, called for retaliation, and mounted guard on the ramparts. But the authorities remained inactive and contented themselves with exhorting the excited crowds to keep calm, since the enemy was strong and near, whereas the Imperial troops were manoeuvring timidly in the distance. Strasbourg continued to maintain its fragile neutrality.

The flames which consumed Strasbourg's bridge announced to Germany, in letters of fire, the total loss of Alsace and of the left bank of the Rhine, from the Hüninger Redoubt to the spot where its tributary, the Queich, flows into it. But for all her forlornness, Alsace did not capitulate willingly, as a letter from Condé to Louvois well shows.

In July 1673 Louvois himself visited Alsace with a view to studying conditions there. Shortly afterwards, surrounded by cavalry and accompanied by a brilliant suite that included Mlle de Montpensier, Louis XIV arrived from Maastricht,

which had just surrendered. The monarch proceeded without delay to make a tour of inspection through the country. Whilst he gazed with astonishment at the treasures from the silver mines of Sainte Marie-les-Mines, and extolled the wealth and civilization of Alsace, the walls of the Decapolis fell. French troops henceforth mounted guard around it, its arsenals were plundered, its inhabitants disarmed, its civic liberties suppressed. Its prosperity, due to the privilege of "immediatization" (*Reichsunmittelbarkeit*) hitherto enjoyed by it, was doomed. "I have never seen people so downcast and dejected," wrote Mlle de Montpensier in her *Memoirs*. Once the work had been accomplished, the King took his departure. Condé advanced against Franche Comté.

In the struggle between Turenne and the allied Imperial and Brandenburgian troops, Turenne dictated the tactics. The Imperials were commanded by Count Montecuccoli, the vanquisher of the Turks, who feared not to measure his strength with the French leader. But Montecuccoli had secret orders from his Emperor to remain on the defensive, and he consequently found his task anything but easy. Leopold's policy proves quite incompatible with the Elector Frederic William's aims. The latter was burning to fight. Had he had his own way he would have marched through the valley of the Lahn on Coblenz with the object of breaking through the enemy lines and chasing the French Army downstream. Since this remained impossible so long as Montecuccoli persisted in the defensive, the Allies continued to be bound down to their base on the Weser. Leaving them no time to cross that river, Turenne threw his own troops on to the right bank of the Rhine, marched on Lippstadt, and barred the way through the Osning Pass at the very spot where Varus's legions had been annihilated many centuries before. This produced the effect of rousing Montecuccoli from his inertia and putting him into motion. Since he was not forbidden to manœuvre, and since Turenne's advance could reasonably be construed as an attack, he marched on Fulda, his aim being to traverse the Lahn valley and reach the enemy's rear. Turenne promptly set off in pursuit in a parallel march upstream, and thereby put his adversary in the alternative either of eluding the pursuers by turning southwards, or of giving battle to them. As Montecuccoli did not dare risk

a battle, he chose the first alternative and moved off in a southerly direction, still pursued by the French. Thus the allies, who had set out to relieve the Dutch, ended up by crossing the Main instead of the Issel.

Having achieved this subsidiary aim, they found Turenne in front of them for the third time. The French Army was concentrated at Mayence to defend the left bank of the Rhine. In vain did the Prince of Orange attempt to draw the enemy away by marching north-westwards on Charleroi. Marshal Luxemburg repelled his attack on that town, and Turenne did not let himself be enticed from the Upper Rhine. Their chessboard moves finally led both adversaries as far as Strasbourg. Here Turenne effected his junction with Condé and compelled the allies to abandon further fruitless manœuvres. The weak forces at Montecuccoli's disposal, whose ranks had been considerably thinned by losses on the march, were unequal to measuring themselves with the French; and to attack the Alsatian Glacis was out of the question.

Only with great reluctance did the Elector of Brandenburg consent to participate in this chess match. The attitude of the Court in Vienna, manifestly hostile to any active German policy and dictated solely by egotistical considerations, inspired him with profound resentment and distrust. When Montecuccoli decided to make a counter-move and swung round to the right, the Elector, although highly sceptical of success, gladly followed suit. The numerical strength of the Allies had been reduced by one-third owing to disease, desertion, and losses suffered during the march. With scarcely 14,000 men they accomplished the long journey back, skirted the frontiers of neutral Hesse, and to their own astonishment reached—thanks to an order given by Louvois, which immobilized Turenne's troops on the left bank of the Rhine—the source of the Lippe before the enemy.

Under these circumstances Turenne resolved to defy the Minister. He demanded and obtained from Louis XIV the authorization to cross the Rhine and push forward into Westphalia. At Wesel he crossed the river, on which great blocks of ice were drifting, and marched at the head of 16,000 men to meet his adversaries with the aim of compelling them to retreat behind the Weser. The Allies' conduct was such as to justify Turenne's confidence. They once more eluded a

battle, and, tired by this enervating campaign, withdrew without fighting beyond the Weser Hills into the interior of Germany. Turenne did not follow them, and entrenched himself at Soest so as to cover the Dutch flank and the Cologne Electorate. Without even turning round, Montecuccoli retired to Bohemia.

Turenne's appearance in the heart of Westphalia entailed fatal consequences for the whole of Northern Germany.

The Elector Frederic William was practically at the end of his resources. He could not dream of attacking Turenne's positions, still less of carrying the war from the Weser to the Rhine. He therefore marched by way of Minden into Brunswick, where he took up his quarters on the river Oker.

The States General declined to pay him the subsidies agreed upon, alleging that he had failed to fulfil his engagements in respect of the plan of campaign; on the other hand, the Duke of Brunswick, intimidated by French threats, served notice on him to leave the Duchy without delay. Disappointed in all his hopes, the Elector decided to open peace negotiations, and returned home. He had saved Holland from destruction and earned but scant gratitude for his services. By the Treaty of St. Germain (April 10th, 1673) he undertook to cease all warlike operations against France or her allies. Under the terms of the supplementary treaty of Vossem he received 800,000 louis d'or as compensation for the unpaid Dutch subsidies, but reserved for himself the right of paying his quota in the event of a future Imperial war.

Louis XIV had good reasons for granting the Elector such favourable terms. The Spanish-Dutch-Austrian coalition assumed dangerous proportions. On August 30th the three Powers in question pledged themselves to endeavour to smash the French Armies in the open field. Montecuccoli consequently received instructions to carry the war across the Rhine. But a long distance separated his winter quarters in Bohemia from that river's banks. Turenne got the start of him, met him half-way, and brought him to a standstill on the Tauber. Once the two Armies came into touch with each other, the old manœuvring tactics recommenced. This time it was Montecuccoli's turn to make the most elegant moves. By dint of flanking marches, during which the adversaries were often within firing distance of one another,

they advanced from the Tauber to the Main. Here the Count succeeded in duping the Viscount by means of a *ruse*. Montecuccoli unexpectedly crossed the Main at Lohr, threatened Turenne's magazines in Aschaffenburg, made a feint of crossing the Rhine at Mayence and pushing forward to the Saar, slipped through the enemy's hands by a swerve to the right, and appeared suddenly before Coblenz, on the left bank of the river.

William of Orange's entry upon the scene of operations enhanced the success of this skilful manœuvre. Orange broke through the cordon of troops surrounding him and marched with his entire Army upstream to meet the Imperials. The move succeeded. The Allies joined forces under the walls of the beleaguered fortress of Bonn, and immediately compelled the French to raise the siege. Conformably with the spirit of the age they had outmanœuvred the enemy *sans coup férir* and won the campaign.

The changed situation induced Louis XIV to make an important decision. He gave orders for the fallen Dutch fortresses to be evacuated, and for Marshal Luxemburg's Army to be drawn-up on the Rhine. Luxemburg set fire to the evacuated towns, and only retained possession of Maastricht and Grawe. He then concentrated before Maastricht all the garrisons thus set free, escaped Orange's attempt to intercept him, and joined hands with Condé.

The campaign of 1673 ended disadvantageously for Louis's strategical plans, but the war was very far from being decided against France. Louis adhered unflinchingly to his expansionist policy, and did not allow himself to be intimidated either by the closer understanding between the allies or by the entry into the war of the Holy Roman Empire.

The violation of Holland and Alsace, and the invasion of the right bank of the Rhine, made the blood of all Germans, whether Catholics or Protestants, boil. The Rhenish Electors cancelled their conventions with the French Crown. The Elector of Brandenburg, taking as his pretext a delay in the payment of an instalment of the sum promised him, denounced the peace treaty which he had recently concluded, and commenced preparations for renewing the war in his twofold capacity of Prince of the Empire and Emperor Leopold's ally. The Swiss Confederation alone persisted in a neutrality favour-

able to France and took no share in the struggle for the Rhine.

On May 28th, 1674, the Empire unfurled its ancient banner. But the Treaty of Westphalia had undermined the unity of the German States, and the territorial dismemberment was such as to cause recruiting to be very sparse. Since the Elector of Brandenburg could not marshal his troops on the Rhine before the autumn, the Austrians were obliged to rely meanwhile on their own efforts and those of a few other small German contingents. Austria's first Army, numbering 10,000 men, under the command of the exiled Duke Charles of Lorraine and General Caprara, took the field near Heidelberg in the spring. A second Army of 10,000 men, commanded by General Bournonville, stood in readiness in Franconia. These numbers were neither large enough to achieve victory, nor small enough to be hopelessly defeated. Louis XIV entrusted Turenne with the defence of the Palatinate and Alsace; Condé's and Luxemburg's troops were arrayed against William of Orange and the Spaniards; and all three generals had strict orders to remain on the defensive. The King reluctantly consented to Turenne taking his Army over to the right bank of the Rhine, whereupon Turenne immediately proceeded to cross the river at Philippsburg and march against the enemy, with the intention of forcing Caprara to give battle and defeating him before the Austrian could effect a junction with Bournonville.

Caprara accepted the challenge near Sinzheim. He stationed his infantry on the plateau behind the precipitous slopes of the Elsentz, covered his flanks by cavalry, occupied Sinzheim and the banks of the Elsentz as advanced positions, and confidently awaited the French frontal attack. But Turenne abandoned stereotyped traditional methods. He placed his cavalry in the centre, engaged the enemy at Sinzheim, and then attacked it on both wings with infantry. The Imperial cavalry looked on hopelessly as the French infantry advanced in scattered formation through the vineyards and scaled the overhanging heights. They were unable to ride forward, had to content themselves with ineffectively discharging their pistols, and were speedily dispersed by enemy fire. The French wings promptly swung round against Caprara's centre, whose attention had hitherto been absorbed

by the French cavalry, and attacked it in the rear. Having accomplished this successful sortie, Turenne evaded Bournonville's counter-attack by means of a rapid retreat over the Rhine. The Imperial forces united and took up, 13,000 strong, their position near Ladenburg, on the northern bank of the Neckar. But Turenne sallied forth once more from the bridgehead Philippsburg, and compelled them to retreat in a northerly direction.

Louvois ordered Turenne to devastate the Palatinate on the right bank of the Rhine as far as the Main, so as to prevent a further concentration of enemy troops between Main and Neckar. Turenne carried out his instructions. All farms and villages were burnt to the ground, the country far and wide presenting a scene of desolation. Having performed this task, Turenne returned to his base on the Lauter.

But devastation did not achieve its aim. The allies avoided the wilderness by transferring their march-route between Mayence and Speyer to the left bank of the Rhine. At Speyer they again crossed over to the right bank and advanced in a parallel march on Kehl. Turenne followed the Allies on the left bank, but was unable to prevent them crossing the river, since Strasbourg had thrown open the bridge and given them free access to the Alsatian plain. This proved the last time that "the citadel of Germany" could demonstrate its strategic importance as a German Rhine fortress.

The Imperial Army, which thanks to reinforcements now numbered 35,000 men, thus re-entered after forty-two years —this time in the course of a *national* war—the country wrested from Germany during the Thirty Years War. Bournonville's dilatoriness and vacillation, in reality due to hopeless incompetence, soon caused him to be suspected of venality. He took up his position in a circle around Strasbourg and left the strategic initiative to the numerically inferior enemy. On October 4th Turenne challenged the Allies at Enzheim, south-west of Strasbourg, where his reinforced right wing attacked. He did not, however, succeed in dislodging the allied troops, and, whilst the latter continued to remain inactive, retreated in the direction of Saverne. Bournonville stayed where he was. Shortly afterwards the Elector of Brandenburg, accompanied by his eldest son Prince Karl

Emil, made his appearance at the head of an Army of 20,000 men. General Derfflinger commanded the infantry, Prince Frederic of Hesse-Homburg the cavalry. On October 15th, 1674, the roll of the Brandenburgian drums was heard for the first time before the walls of Strasbourg. The allied forces now numbered over 50,000 men, but Bournonville could not be induced to attack. He gave Turenne time to obtain reinforcements, and contented himself with carrying the Imperial colours into Upper Alsace. Winter came, bringing with it discouragement and disease into the German camp.

Turenne had not the slightest intention of abandoning Alsace to the enemy. He made a feint of going into winter quarters between Hagenau, Wissembourg, and Saverne, but in reality he silently withdrew his troops to the Moselle, and, concealed behind the rampart formed by the Vosges, marched upstream. The Imperials and Brandenburgians settled down unconcernedly in Alsace, and retired to their winter quarters between Strasbourg and Belfort. Their left wing lay in the Sundgau and on the threshold of the Burgundian Gate, the centre in the environs of Rufach and Colmar, and the right wing between Selestat and Benfeld. Strasbourg remained benevolently neutral, covering the right flank, in front of which Turenne's Army was commonly believed to be wintering. In this situation the news suddenly reached them about New Year that the French Generalissimo had drawn-up his troops to the West of the Vosges, with a view to attacking their scattered forces. Seriously alarmed, the Allies hurriedly concentrated around Colmar. Advancing along the western slopes of the Vosges, Turenne already reached Remiremont before being informed that the Allies were breaking-up their camp. But he was not to be deterred from attacking them. Cleverly cloaking his real intentions by despatching flying columns over the nearest passes, he hastened with his main Army by forced marches to the South, to force open the Burgundian Gate and throw himself on to the allied left wing. He arrived too late to overtake the enemy at Altkirch, where he found even the baggage-train gone, but at once continued in hot pursuit, repulsed the cavalry sent to bar the way between Muhlhouse and Rufach, and caught up the main body of the Allies between Colmar and Türkheim, where they had taken up their positions behind the gravel bed of

the Fecht. Turenne turned the enemy's right flank and occupied Türkheim, whereupon Bournonville and the Elector decided to withdraw their troops so as to avoid complete envelopment. This withdrawal from the battlefield preluded a general retreat. The Allies lacked a secure base and were unable to keep the field in front of Strasbourg's carefully closed gates. They had therefore no choice but to retire to the right bank of the Rhine. They returned broken in spirit, and the Elector Frederic William sat dejectedly on his steed. He and Bournonville had lost the day at Türkheim, and the Elector also mourned the loss of his son, who succumbed to typhoid fever on December 7th. The allied offensive had failed.

Turenne's decision to undertake a winter campaign, that brought a bold move on his part and two encounters of minor importance, proved sufficient to win back Alsace and the left bank of the Rhine for France.

Condé, who commanded the French forces in Holland in 1674, did not meet with quite so much success. Nevertheless he accomplished, at the price of severe fighting, the task assigned him of preventing an enemy incursion into Dutch territory. The united Spanish and Dutch Armies, together with a corps of Imperials under De Souches, advanced from the Sambre and came into collision with the French near Senève on August 11th. A murderous battle ensued, in which the French held their own. Louis XIV's balance-sheet for the outgoing year thus booked among its assets the retention of Alsace and the recovery of Franche Comté—which, being defenceless, was easily overrun within a few weeks; but no decisive event could be registered. Louis found himself compelled to concentrate his attention on the main fronts, although the Allies had not put forth all their strength against him, and notwithstanding the fact that accomplices of his were to be found in the enemy's ranks. Holland, where the "military picnic" came to an end after a few insignificant skirmishes, was entirely out of danger. Events had reduced the war to being "neither one thing nor the other."

Despite his fresh disappointments, the Elector Frederic William did not take his Army home, but established his winter quarter in Franconia, whence he hastened to Cleves to discuss with Orange plans for the coming spring campaign.

At the same time he strained every effort to induce the Court of Vienna to take more energetic action. Louis XIV now came, albeit somewhat tardily, to recognize in this tenacious and many-sided man his most formidable German antagonist. He decided, in consequence, to saddle him with a new foe, specially designed for the purpose, and told-off Sweden, in exchange for subsidies, against the Brandenburgian. In order to keep the Emperor busy, Louis simultaneously excited Leopold's Hungarian subjects to rebel anew. The French King had learnt to grasp the connection between political and military strategy; henceforth he contented himself with letting his marshals entwine laurel wreaths around his head, whilst keeping personally aloof from the fray.

In the spring of 1675 two French Armies, prepared to wage war on the two fronts, took the field—that of Marshal Luxembourg in the North, that of Turenne in the South. The Allies, for their part, also made extensive preparations. Orange took command of the Northern front, Montecuccoli of the Rhine Army. But the leaders were so deeply imbued with the spirit of the age, which required bloodless manœuvres in order to maintain intact a Field Army of carefully drilled recruits as the invaluable and indispensable instrument of a *politique de cabinet*, that decisions on the battlefield were only sought as a last resort in desperate situations. Montecuccoli and Turenne furnished the most typical examples of this dandyish method of warfare. Montecuccoli advanced on Strasbourg. Here he found his flank threatened by Turenne, whereupon he swerved and appeared suddenly on the left bank before Speyer, whence he watched his opponent cross over to the right bank at Ottenheim, above Strasbourg, by way of a counter-move. Montecuccoli wheeled round, hastily followed Turenne, and proceeded to dance with his great antagonist a number of warlike *pas* between Kehl and Offenburg, on the banks of the Schutter and the Reuch, either Army—and together, be it parenthetically remarked, they numbered some 50,000 men—spinning round like a top. It resembled a never-ending *pas de deux*. Heavy rain gradually transformed the dancing-ground into a morass.

The gaunt spectres of famine and disease became visible in both camps, where the troops were exhausted by prolonged marches and manœuvres. Turenne succeeded in forcing

the enemy to take up positions at Sasbach, which placed them at the mercy of the French. But Fate decreed that a stray Austrian cannon-ball should suddenly put an end to the great French Marshal's career on July 27th, 1675. He expired before even his mutilated body dropped from the saddle. The leaderless Army abstained from attacking, and withdrew across the Rhine without further ado.

Montecuccoli followed at their heels, but although he inflicted heavy losses on them he proved unable to give the campaign on the Upper Rhine a decisive turn. Louis sent Marshal Créqui, who commanded a division on the Moselle, to meet him, and the artificial manœuvres recommenced. Operations were concentrated around Brisach. Créqui recaptured this fortress, being thus compensated for the loss of Treves, which surrendered to Duke Charles of Lorraine on August 11th.

Meanwhile a series of elaborate encounters had taken place in Holland between Orange and the Duke of Luxemburg. The latter took Ypres. But Turenne's untimely death weighed more heavily in the balance than either the recapture of Brisach or the possession of the Flemish coast. Military operations no longer afforded Louis XIV any real satisfaction.

About this time a new song came into vogue at Strasbourg—a song composed in honour of a German Prince whose fame spread suddenly far and wide. It told in stirring strophes of the "Swede from the Land of Midnight," who, lured by the bait of French gold, invaded Brandenburg, where arson and pillage marked his path. It was the minstrel's lay of the battle of Fehrbellin, in which the Elector Frederic William routed, on June 28th, 1675, the Swedish forces under Wrangel.

But there were no Brandenburgian troops on the Rhine, where a war of position was in progress. Nor did any great battle take place in Flanders. Marshal Luxemburg and the Prince of Orange confined themselves to siege operations, which lasted well into 1676. Louis instructed his marshals not to accept any further pitched battles, but to limit their efforts to devastating the country, burning those towns which might stand in their way, and capturing such fortresses as he intended to keep after the conclusion of peace. The capture of Fort Condé, and of Valenciennes and Cambrai—

i.e. the central position between Oise and Sambre—sufficed to consolidate his northern front until the time should come for renewing active operations under more favourable auspices. After Admiral Duquesne's victory over the allied Spanish and Dutch fleets in the roadstead of Palermo, and the death of the Dutch naval hero De Ruyter on April 29th, 1676, the desire for peace became general.

Louis XIV retained the initiative. Whilst his marshals spun out the campaign, he secretly proposed an advantageous settlement to the States General. The Dutch patricians were agreeable to open negotiations with the French monarch, although the English Parliament offered them naval assistance, and despite the fact that Louis's Army did not stand before Amsterdam, but before Ghent. When the Dutch delegate, Beverningk arrived at French headquarters on June 10th, 1678, and a hitch occurred in the negotiations on account of his reluctance to abandon Holland's Allies, Louis asked him point-blank "whether they were afraid" of the latter, adding: "I will support you against them." The States General were not blind to the advantages which Louis offered—namely, the restitution of all Dutch territory occupied by French troops, and a modification in Holland's favour of French Customs duties. Peace was therefore concluded. In vain did Orange seek, by attacking Marshal Luxemburg at Mons, to prevent by means of an overtly hostile act the ratification of an agreement drawn-up behind the back of Holland's Allies and to their palpable disadvantage. On August 10th, 1678, France signed the Treaty of Nymwegen with the Dutch Republic, which remained in full possession of its territory and treasures.

Thus Louis XIV, who in 1672 had gone to war with the intention of punishing, if not destroying, Holland, came to terms with the States General, who readily consented to his obtaining compensation elsewhere—namely, in the Spanish Netherlands and Franche Comté. The coalition was broken up, and Spain became the scapegoat. Orange, who would fain have restored to Holland her honour, found himself brushed aside. Spain lost Franche Comté and a number of fortresses in Flanders. Leopold I and the German Empire adhered to the peace treaty on February 5th, 1679. Louis XIV gave back Philipsburg, but kept Alsace together with all his usurped rights, and—in his capacity as "guarantor" of the

very treaty of Westphalia he had just violated in Alsace—set out against the Elector Frederic William with the object of compelling him to restore Pomerania to Sweden. The victory of Fehrbellin, the headlong flight of the Swedish Army's beaten remnants over the Frische Haff, Frederic William's triumphal progress in Holstein and Livonia—all these heroic efforts were unavailing and rendered null and void by the pact of Nymwegen. When French forces crossed the Weser, the Great Elector, deserted by all, had to renounce his claim to Pomerania. Louis XIV took over the part played by Mazarin at the Congress of Oliva, and awarded that province to Sweden for the second time, in accordance with the Peace of Westphalia.

Louis emerged from his struggle against the coalition, and from the ensuing negotiations with disunited allies, as predominant power in Europe. Conscious of his triumph, he caused a commemorative medal to be struck with the proud device: *nec pluribus impar*.

On June 29th, 1679, the Great Elector accepted at St. Germain-en-Laye the peace of renunciation imposed on him, entered into an alliance with Louis XIV, and bequeathed his vengeance as a legacy to future generations.

Diplomacy won the victory which France had sought to obtain by force. Louis XIV not only smashed the coalition, but, thanks to Holland's shortsighted egotism, made good, and even profited by, the strategic mistake committed in 1672, when he opened his campaign along the eccentric line of operations on the Lower Rhine, whilst exposing his northern flank to an attack from the Spanish Netherlands. Holland's defection had enabled him to take the offensive against Spain and secure his northern flank, thus preparing the way for a new war of conquest.

Louis's expedition against the Rhine, which failed in the delta region, led to a consolidation of France's flanking position in Flanders and of her base of operations on the Upper Rhine. St. Omer, Cambrai, Valenciennes, Condé, and Maubeuge fell into the King's hands and soon bristled with Vauban's bastions. Lorraine lost the fortress of Marsal, which covered the ancient Roman road leading through the Seille marshes, and Franche Comté was converted into a strongly fortified permanent French camp.

Louis XIV restored to the Rhine-Rhône line its natural unbroken continuity as a geographical and strategic march-route,¹ and Charles the Bold's dream seemed to be approaching fulfilment. In order to dispel any lingering doubts as to how France, once her supremacy on the Rhine definitely assured, intended interpreting the Peace of Westphalia, Louis proceeded to set up special tribunals (*Chambres de Réunion*) in Besançon, Metz, and Brisach with the object of mediatizing those Alsatian Estates which had hitherto been "immediatized," and of placing them under his direct control.

Thus, in the historic struggle for the Rhine, a "peace of conquest" (*la paix conquérante*) followed the war of conquest. Under French military pressure the citizens of the Decapolis were compelled to swear allegiance and obedience to their "most gracious Lord and Sovereign Protector." On March 22nd, 1680, the Chambre de Réunion in Brisach proclaimed the French King's sovereignty over Alsace. The German Reichstag vainly protested against this high-handed act; equally vain were the unanimous protests of all the Imperial Free Towns. Germany lost Alsace.

Strasbourg's hour of doom also drew nigh. Its authorities demanded that its adhesion to the Holy Roman Empire should be expressly confirmed by the Treaty of Nymwegen. But their request remained unheeded. The proud old Free City lay isolated on the Rhine's left bank. Its environs, as far as the glacis, had been annexed by the Chambers of Reunion, the Rhine redoubt razed. On the left bank, outside the ramparts, the Customs bastion still stood erect, a solitary stronghold; but the Imperial troops had already evacuated Kehl, on the opposite side. Strasbourg's authorities were frightened. They declined an offer of an Imperial garrison, so as not to provoke the French, and awaited coming events with folded arms, confiding in a neutrality utterly powerless to defend itself. Its citizens were undoubtedly German in feeling and thought, but their spirit of resistance was weakened, whereas the enemy unrelentingly prepared to deal a swift and sudden blow. On September 27th, 1681, General Montclaer appeared with an Army in front of the walls. Under cover of darkness three regiments of dragoons advanced along the river's bank and occupied the Customs redoubt; when

¹ *Vide p. 17.*

morning dawned 35,000 troops with 82 guns stood before the outer fortifications ready to storm them. One last sound could be heard of a watchman's horn on the cathedral tower, of tocsins summoning defenders of liberty to arms; arsenal and Town Hall were once more besieged by citizens calling for weapons, whilst Mayor and Corporation parleyed with a French officer who required recognition of his sovereign's authority and immediate opening of the city's gates. Backed by his "formidable legions," France's King, both judge and claimant, demanded right of entry.

The authorities pacified the excited populace and commenced pourparlers.

For two days Strasbourg's citizens refused to surrender. But there were not sufficient guns on the ramparts, the garrison counted scarcely 600 men, no help of any sort appeared in sight. The Swiss, with whom Strasbourg's burgesses had once upon a time fought shoulder to shoulder against Burgundy's Duke, to-day provided France with her best regiments; Leopold I, who had been inveigled into signing the captious Treaty of Nymwegen, now found himself bound to Louis's chariot by their secret compact regarding Spain's heritage; and no one called in question the Holy Roman Empire's manifest decrepitude. Envoys sent to the enemy camp at Telkirch to continue negotiations found themselves in Louvois's presence, who spoke of bombardment and storming, whilst mounted couriers from Saverne, forerunners of the royal bodyguard, announced that his Most Christian Majesty intended making his solemn entry into his "faithful city" within a few days. But his Majesty narrowly missed having to wait.

Fortunately, however, for Louis, Strasbourg's authorities decided under these circumstances "to yield with Christian forbearance to violence," and on September 30th, 1681, signed the deed of capitulation. The greatest military Power of the time thus forced a city to surrender, which for centuries had stubbornly maintained its autonomy and thereby gradually lost touch—like so many other German towns and districts—with the Mother Country. That same afternoon Louvois and Montclaer, with their regiments, rode through the city's gates, to the accompaniment of a roll of drums. Strasbourg, with its deserted streets and empty squares, resembled a cemetery. A dull grey sky cast its melancholy reflection

in the Ill's silvery waters. French military bands sounded Freedom's death-knell.

Two days later gilded coaches, conveying Louis XIV and his court, drove down the Saverne road. The fertile Alsatian plain lay bathed in glorious autumn sunshine. "What a beautiful garden!" joyfully exclaimed his Most Christian Majesty. Strasbourg awaited its Sovereign. Its citizens received orders to decorate their houses, and guns placed on the ramparts fired a salute. Germany's Imperial Eagle vanished from all gateways and public buildings, being replaced by France's *fleur de lis*. Vauban dismantled the citadel surmounting the "Butchers' Gate," which had so long dominated town and river alike.

Thus Strasbourg, together with the whole of Alsace, became French property. Germany's citadel was transformed into a bastion directed against herself, the Alsatian borderland into a French glacis. The Holy Roman Empire launched forth impotent imprecations.

Louis did not confine his policy of "reunion" to Alsace. It assumed truly universal dimensions. Territories belonging to the Palatinate, Lorraine, the Spanish Netherlands, the Middle and Lower Rhine, Italy, were indiscriminately "re-united" to France. French troops occupied Saarbrücken and Chiny, Sponheim and Leiningen, Virton and Oberstein, Veldenz and Zweibrücken and Blieskastel, parts of Mauderscheid, the Abbey of Prüm, the Castle of Ahrenberg, and the Casale Pass. Louis even went so far as to demand the surrender of the fortress of Luxemburg, held by Spain, and despatched a French Army against it without any declaration of war.

No one dared defy the aggressor.

When the harassed nations, whose rights were trampled under foot, began to recover their breath, and the Emperor Leopold proposed an anti-French alliance to his Confederate Princes, Louis's superior diplomacy succeeded, not only in fanning again the flames of insurrection in Hungary, but also in involving Leopold in a war with Turkey. Already in dire straits in the West, the Holy Roman Empire suddenly found itself confronted by new perils in the East. Kara Mustapha Pasha, master of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, advanced on Vienna, and ere long thundered at its gates. Louis contemplated without regret (*sans déplaisir*) Vienna's

distress, and, in his eagerness to witness Austria's final downfall, even endeavoured to dissuade King John Sobieski of Poland from going to the rescue.

While Kara Mustapha's forces lay before Vienna, and the Viennese sheltered themselves as best they could behind their battered ramparts, French troops were busy establishing themselves securely in the Alpine passes, on the Rhine and Moselle, and in Flanders.

Whenever, throughout this whole period, which saw Christendom exposed to the gravest danger it had ever known since Charles Martel, a move was made or attempted on its behalf, we witness a counter-move on the part of the Most Christian Majesty of France. John Sobieski pushes forward through Moravia to relieve Vienna; a French Army entrenches itself at Casale, near the source of the Po. Duke Charles of Lorraine commands the Imperial troops on the Kahlenberg; Louis causes the military road leading through Lorraine to the Rhine to be paved. Two German Princes, Max Emmanuel of Bavaria and John George of Saxony, declare their readiness, in the interest alike of Christendom and the Empire, to place themselves and their Armies under Duke Charles's orders; Louis annexes territory belonging to the Palatinate, Treves, and Spain. Marshal Count Waldeck gathers soldiers for an expedition against the Turks; Louis sends agents to Stambul to start negotiations in view of opening the Levant to French trade, after Admiral Duquesne has hoisted France's war-flag at Chios. Count Rüdiger von Starhemberg defends Vienna, the Gate of the West, in a life-and-death struggle against wild Janissary assailants; Louis removes the famous cannons from Strasbourg, and deprives the citizens of that ancient Free City of their hereditary liberties and privileges. On September 11th, 1683, the allied Polish and German Armies defeat the Turks in a desperate battle outside Vienna's walls and drive them eastwards; Louis's troops stand before Luxemburg and beleaguer, in the midst of peace, the Most Catholic Spanish King's last remaining fortress in the Ardennes. And whereas the Great Elector sits, bound with chains forged at St. Germain-en-Laye and chafing at his impotence, on the banks of the Spree, the Sun-King's omnipotence is mirrored in the waters of the conquered Rhine.

The conqueror of Alsace, the "Protector of the Rhine-land," felt himself attached to the tyrant of Constantinople and devastator of the Danube's fertile plains by a solidarity of interests similar to that which already united Francis I and Soliman the Magnificent in days gone by. His policy inspired his subjects with an imperturbable belief that France was not only predestined to supremacy in Europe, but also the chosen guide of mankind in every sphere of life.

Yet, notwithstanding his estrangement from the rest of Christendom, Louis found an opportunity to strike a noble attitude, which, while affording due satisfaction to this consummate autocrat's artistic propensities and to French taste in general, entailed no political sacrifice. He announced his intention of not "reuniting" Luxemburg to France so long as Turkish infidels continued to threaten Vienna. This had the effect of sparing Luxemburg bombardment and capitulation—until the following year. When, on June 4th, 1684, Spain's flag disappeared from the ramparts of the famished fortress, which had been defended with true Spanish valour, Hungary's plains resounded with the din of a struggle between Austria and Turkey of which no end could be foreseen. Poland reverted to her traditional Slavophil policy, and John Sobieski, who in addition to being married to a French lady was a zealous correspondent of his Most Christian Majesty, returned home.

Relying on the formidable strength of his strategic position and on his far-reaching secret political alliances, Louis now came forward with a demand that the Holy Roman Empire should conclude with France a Thirty Years Truce based on the *status quo*, *i.e.* explicit admission of the validity of the "reunions." It was a masterly move on his part. Leopold I hesitated as to whether he should resign himself to an armistice in the East or West. In the West the entire fabric of the Holy Roman Empire was tottering, in the East Austria was in the throes of her war with Turkey. Extreme peril thus loomed ahead on either side. The Great Elector advocated acceptance of Louis's terms in order to free himself from his own untenable position, which prevented him alike from marching with sufficient troops to the Emperor's assistance, or openly challenging France. He earnestly entreated Louis, through the medium of his Most Christian Majesty's Ambassador

Rébenac, not to take unfair advantage of the Empire's "desperate situation," and he assured the Imperial Ambassador Lamberg of the impossibility for Brandenburg to separate herself at present from the French King. Since the Reichstag could likewise discover no loophole of escape, Leopold consented to a temporary agreement with France, so as to be able to consolidate his position in the East. On August 15th, 1684, the Reichstag consented under protest to a twenty years' truce with the French Crown and recognized the "re-unions." Force thus begot Right, whilst impotence entailed absence of rights. Nevertheless force had not yet entirely stifled the voice of the oppressed. If political wisdom in Germany was conspicuous by its absence, a German philosophy still existed. Leibnitz arose to launch a vehement pamphlet, in which the Sun-King's absolutism and lust of domination were scathingly denounced, under the satirical title: *Mars Christianissimus*.

But his arrow fell short of the mark. Louis XIV personified France's pre-eminence too brilliantly to be vulnerable to shafts of satire. The most Christian King had attained the summit of his absolute power. Spain was eliminated from the struggle, the Empire robbed and humiliated, Holland's development throttled, at least one-half of the Rhine basin at France's mercy. In Switzerland, it is true, that river still flowed through Germanic land, but the Swiss Confederation had concluded a pact of friendship with Louis and provided him with fourteen regiments; the Rhine's upper reaches were bordered by German-inhabited valleys, but French bridges, protected on either bank by French fortresses, spanned them; between Mayence and Cologne it pursued its course between German States, but for these France's good graces were indispensable; and its ramified estuary lay in a Germanic country, that had once been free and great, but now found itself economically dependent on France.

The struggle for the Rhine developed into the national tragedy of the German people. The uniformity of landscape characteristic of those regions which are watered by the Upper Rhine corresponds to the homogeneity of their population. Both furnish an outward and visible sign of the indivisibility of that river's basin. This natural indivisibility has always constituted an obstacle to the establishment of political

boundaries on its banks; for if the stream undoubtedly impedes the tactical movements of hostile Armies, it does not form a strategic frontier. Regarded in the light of these facts, all the unceasing French incursions into Rhenish territory appear as so many links of a single unbroken chain of efforts to conquer the entire Rhine basin. Up to now, France had only partially accomplished her design. But the guiding impulse, at first purely instinctive, which since her history's earliest dawn invariably underlay her expansion towards the East, became ever more conscious of its aim and ever more irresistible as she gradually advanced from one stepping-stone to another. If Louis XIV concluded a truce in 1684, it was only because he needed time to organize the conquests already achieved and to redistribute the pieces on the chess-board.

The fact of France taking Strasbourg, pushing forward her advanced posts to the Middle Rhine, and asserting her claim to the Rhine as her "natural frontier" at the dawn of a new political era, characterized by the formation of European Great Powers and a European equilibrium, transformed the nature of the struggle for that river. This struggle now became the central problem of world politics, the solution of which henceforth affected, not only France and Germany, but all European States. For no State could view with equanimity the establishment of imperialist France on the Rhine and her annexation of the Rhine-Rhône route, unless it were prepared to forgo beforehand all claim to equal rights in the forthcoming universal tussle as to who should have a decisive share in shaping the world's destinies, or in the future competition for possession of earthly riches, and to sacrifice its national aspirations to French dreams of hegemony.

The duration of the truce concluded between France and Germany in 1684 was fixed at twenty years. But only four years elapsed before Louis XIV, sure of his might and well knowing that the Turkish War absorbed every available resource of the Holy Roman Empire, deliberately broke it in order to renew the struggle for the Rhine, to increase his influence in the Rhine basin, and to fortify his great intermediate base of operations between the Moselle and the Queich.

Events adapt themselves without difficulty to the expansionist policy of a strong and unscrupulous statesman, and bear him along on their tide. Louis had reached the pinnacle of his glory and did not shrink from any manifestation of his omnipotence. When the Genoese Republic refused, in 1685, to supply salt to the garrison in Casale, Louis instructed Admiral Duquesne to bombard the port wherein lay so much accumulated wealth. And when the Doge, whom the constitution did not permit to leave the Republic's territory during his tenure of office, arrived in Versailles, whither he had been summoned by Louis, his Most Christian Majesty received him in the sumptuous Gallery of Mirrors as though he were a mere insubordinate vassal to be browbeaten and humiliated.

Aggressive in his dealings with foreign Powers, Louis was not less unbending an autocrat in his home policy; but in either case he had the enthusiastic support of the whole French nation. Louis sought to further the unity of the State, not only by depriving his Huguenot subjects of all their guarantees, but by forcing them to forswear their faith. Not for nothing did he possess the largest standing Army in Europe—an Army, of which Swiss, Italian, German, Walloon, Irish, and Scotch recruits formed more than two-thirds. A number of these tough customers were stationed by order in the Protestant districts of France, where, exempted from all discipline, they were quartered on the unfortunate inhabitants at the latter's expense, until, driven to desperation, their unwilling hosts purchased relief from these "booted missionaries" by returning to a Church which, albeit Catholic, was none the less tinged with Gallicanism. Louvois, the genial organizer of this Army, employed his "dragoons" in their new capacity with unprecedented success. The "dragonades" produced such an effect, that in the old Huguenot town of Nîmes 60,000 Calvinists abjured heresy within three days, whilst in La Rochelle, another citadel of Protestantism, every single citizen returned to the State religion in the space of twenty-four hours.

These conversions *en masse* rendered it easy to maintain that, there being practically no Huguenots left, the Edict of Nantes had lost its *raison d'être* and could be revoked. This measure was taken in 1685. Numerous Huguenots,

however, being still unconverted, took refuge in flight. But although their emigration temporarily weakened France, the policy leading up to it none the less corresponds to the French ideal of the "model State" as a rigidly organized, homogeneous unit. A "unification" thus enforced, involved, it is true, a danger—namely, that of overstraining the ropes to such an extent as to cause them to snap. But there was no risk of this danger becoming actual so long as the nation's collective energy and will to power remained concentrated on its struggle for European hegemony.

When, in 1688, Louis XIV commenced his third war of conquest, he undoubtedly followed a personal impulse and acted conformably with century-old ancestral traditions. But the national craving for expansion likewise proved a strong incentive.

On September 24th, 1688, Louis issued a manifesto announcing to the world that the Emperor Leopold was organizing an armed coalition against France. His Most Christian Majesty declared that he asked for nothing else but lasting peace under the conditions laid down by the truce of 1684; further, the recognition of his brother Philip's just claim to the Palatinate, which he had inherited as husband of the late Palsgrave Charles's sister Elizabeth Charlotte; and Cardinal Fürstenberg's reinstallation as Archbishop of Cologne. Since these reasonable demands had been refused, no other choice remained to his Majesty but to take up arms to defend the honour and interests of France.

Thus "the honour and interests of France" required that Francis Egon von Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasbourg, Louis's creature, who on January 7th, 1688, had been elected, thanks to French pressure, by a majority, but not the prescribed proportional majority, Coadjutor of Cologne with right of succession on the present Archbishop's demise, should be invested with those functions despite the opposition alike of Pope and Emperor. The "honour and interests of France" likewise demanded that Philip of Orleans, Elizabeth Charlotte's husband, and brother-in-law of Palsgrave Charles who died in 1685, should receive the Simmern family's allodial estates on the Hunsrück and the Rhine in order that he might become a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. France's interests were "injured" by the fact that Joseph Clement

of Bavaria had been nominated to the Archiepiscopal see of Cologne, and Philip's indefensible claim "squared" with an ample sum of money. But there was something still more important: France's right to permanently annex the "re-united" territories had not yet been admitted by the interested Powers—nay, she found herself confronted by a defensive alliance, concluded at Augsburg on July 9th, 1688, and based on an Army of 46,000 men, between Leopold, the German Princes, Spain, and Sweden, having for its aim to protect the Empire against aggression until such time as the Empire could protect itself.

Louis's manifesto prudently omitted to mention that France did not in reality fear for her honour or her legitimate interests, but for her hegemony—all the more so as certain changes were taking place in England and Holland which threatened to reduce the number of her clients. Charles II of England died in 1686. His successor, pensioner of France and fervent Catholic, sat uneasily on a precarious throne; and the heir apparent was none other than William of Orange, who had married James II's Protestant daughter Mary.

Under these circumstances Louis decided to undertake a preventive war, the real nature of which—the maintenance and consolidation of French hegemony—his pompous manifesto veiled but flimsily. He knew that Germany's forces were tied up in Hungary, and hoped in consequence to be able to overwhelm the Empire without difficulty. Louis felt himself equal to the task, so long as Leopold was occupied elsewhere and England had not found time, amidst the turmoil of revolution, to pronounce herself definitely in Orange's favour. He thought to unravel by a single well-aimed stroke the complicated tangle of Continental and English politics. Could he suddenly compel the Empire to recognize the "reunions" as a permanent settlement, all obstacles to France's supremacy on the Rhine would be removed. In this case the English nation would possibly hesitate to dethrone James II, and William of Orange's activity would remain confined to the very limited space contained within his native dikes.

But although the Empire's forces were tied up in the East, the fortunes of war now began to turn in their favour. Ever since the Great Elector had severed his unwilling alliance

with France, and Max Emmanuel of Bavaria had married the Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria, Brandenburg and Bavaria were to be seen fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Imperial troops, with highly advantageous results. On September 2nd, 1686, German regiments stormed the Hungarian royal castle of Ofen, which for one hundred and forty-five years past had been in Turkish hands ; on August 12th, 1687, Max Emmanuel and Duke Charles of Lorraine defeated the Turks at Mohacz ; and on September 6th a German Army captured Belgrade for the first time. The Turks, it is true, re-took it on October 8th, but on August 19th they were decisively routed at Salankemen, when Margrave Louis William of Baden led Germany's soldiers to victory. Unfortunately the victor did not succeed in following-up his success and driving the Turks across the Danube for good. The war on two fronts, which Louis XIV forced on Germany, obliged Louis William to turn his footsteps towards home, where his predecessor, Duke Charles of Lorraine, had just died. French Armies were carrying fire and sword into Germany's undefended territory.

When he reopened hostilities in 1688 Louis XIV intended, not so much commencing a campaign on a large scale, as intimidating his adversaries by an impressive display of strength. He hoped, by overrunning the unprotected Rhine basin, to be able to compel the Empire to sue for peace on his terms before other Powers could complete their preparations. In pursuance of this plan, Louvois ordered a number of regiments to take up defensive positions on the Dutch frontier, whilst concentrating the attacking Army on the Upper Rhine, where the well-nigh impregnable flanking position Hüningen-Freiburg-Brisach-Strasbourg enabled it to manœuvre at will. Since Louis had not evacuated Lorraine, and took advantage of the "misunderstanding" in regard to the Cologne Arch-bishopric to advance along the Moselle valley and the Lorraine plateau, his Army stood ready to march the instant war was declared. When Louis published his manifesto, every fortress and magazine was replete. Once more, as at the outbreak of the first Dutch war, France's aristocracy, eager to gather fresh laurels, flocked to arms in anticipation of an easy triumph. Forty thousand picked troops, commanded by the Dauphin, carried her flag across the Rhine. Louvois planned to attack

the Neckar Gate from the powerful flanking position on the Upper Rhine, and under cover of this attack to hurl two columns against Mayence and Coblenz respectively. The Dauphin, and his military adviser Marshal Duras, led the flanking corps launched against Philippsburg with the intention of gaining possession of the Neckar line. General Boufflers advanced by way of Kaiserslautern on Mayence, while Marshal de Lorges marched downstream *via* Treves on Coblenz and Cologne.

When Louis's Ambassador presented, on October 3rd, 1688, the declaration of war to the Reichstag, French Armies already stood before Philippsburg and Mayence. On September 22nd the Dauphin crossed the Lauter, and on September 25th Boufflers appeared before Kaiserslautern. On October 6th Vauban's batteries began to bombard Philippsburg; Boufflers took the undefended fortress of Kaiserslautern and pushed forward towards Mayence; Treves fell into Marshal de Lorges's hands.

Before Philippsburg's walls Vauban initiated his royal pupil into the mysteries of the besieger's art. When that fortress fell, Mayence had already capitulated to Boufflers. Louis's hireling, Fürstenberg, threw open the gates of Bonn, Kaiserswerth, Rheinsberg, and Neuss. Only Coblenz and Cologne held out, and were finally relieved by Imperial troops despatched to their assistance. The Dauphin's cavalry penetrated into the Neckar valley and advanced as far as Stuttgart without encountering resistance. The invasion now reached its culminating point. French Armies occupied the entire Rhine basin between Hüningen and Rheinsberg. It seemed as though they were anxious to ascertain for themselves the immutable strategic conditions which, like an unchangeable natural law, govern the region situated between the Moselle and the Neckar, for they spread over the whole territory stretching from Metz to Heilbronn, and levied contribution on its unfortunate inhabitants. The keys of a hundred towns and 2,000,000 louis d'or in cash were the trophies brought back by the Dauphin from this campaign, which had been ostensibly undertaken for the purpose of enforcing Philip of Orleans's claim to the Simmern estates. Only those towns annexed by France as forming part of Philip's patrimony, such as Germersheim, were spared by the looting soldiery.

Elizabeth Charlotte, Philip's wife, meanwhile spent sleepless nights in her luxurious apartments in Versailles, brooding over the miseries of her native land, formerly happy and prosperous. And yet an organized regular war was still going on there, not methodical devastation. Not until the French War Cabinet discovered that Louis's wanton invasion of Germany had galvanized into activity the very alliance which his Most Christian Majesty fondly hoped by his aggression to nip in the bud, did it decide to lay waste the Palatinate systematically.

James II had been dethroned, and on November 16th, 1688, William of Orange landed with his consort at Torbay to enter upon Elizabeth's heritage and assume command of England's fleet. Leopold and the German Princes resolved to risk hostilities on two fronts, the Reichstag proclaimed an "imperial war." Savoy, Sweden, Spain rose to arms against the despot who strove, in league with Mohammedan Turkey, to establish his hegemony in Europe.

France being menaced both on land and sea by a concentric advance of the allies, Louvois fell back on an old scheme of Anne de Montmorency's and suggested having recourse to a war of devastation in order to cover the French front on the Rhine. *It was therefore decided to transform the entire Palatinate and the principality of Baden-Durlach into a desert.* A methodical devastation ensued, which has no parallel in history. It was not a question of merely clearing an outlying tract of land, of covering a retreat, of widening-up a line of barrage in a sparsely populated zone. The promoters of the scheme pursued the aim of discouraging the enemy by the sight of a wilderness, of deterring that enemy from any attempt to reconquer an absolutely desolate waste, and of creating around France's eastern border a desert extending from the Kintzig to the Nahe, from the Tauber to the Saar—a Sahara in which there should be neither stronghold nor village nor dwelling-house, neither plant nor water nor any living thing. The region condemned to this appalling fate measured 100 miles in length and from 50 to 112 miles in breadth.

Marshal Duras gave orders to General Mélac to devastate Baden and that part of the Palatinate situated on the right bank of the Rhine, while General Montclaer had instructions

to lay waste the left bank. On January 18th, 1689, Mélac commenced operations by destroying all fruit trees and vineyards on the Bergstrasse and in the Neckar valley, and burning every village and farmhouse from Heilbronn to Handschuhsheim and from Rastatt to Mayence. On February 16th he set fire to Heidelberg Castle; gunpowder completed the incendiary's work, whereupon the town of Heidelberg was evacuated on March 2nd and laid in ruins. On the following day Mélac gave notice to the inhabitants of Mannheim that their town would be burnt, and that they could emigrate to Alsace. Two days later Mannheim was reduced to ashes. Mélac then carried devastation upstream. Offenburg, Pforzheim, Durlach, Rastatt, innumerable farms and villages, were levelled to the ground. Before setting alight Baden-Baden, the incendiaries desecrated and plundered the royal tombs in the church vaults. By August 24th Mélac had finished his task. Marshal Duras caused the right bank of the Rhine north of the Kintzig to be evacuated, and his troops retired within the radius of their fortresses in Breisgau and Alsace.

General Montclaer laid waste the left bank with equal thoroughness. He carried with him a list of 1,200 towns, villages, and farmhouses doomed to perdition. Upstream and downstream the countryside was ablaze. On Whit-Tuesday, May 31st, 1689, Speyer flared up, and seventy-two hours later nothing remained but a heap of smouldering ashes, neither the Bishop's palace nor the cathedral being spared. The tombs of the Emperors were plundered and the surviving fragments of the imperial bones scattered to the wind. At precisely the same hour Worms illuminated the horizon, after having been pillaged during three days. The inhabitants fled to the river's banks, whence they watched gable after gable, roof after roof, collapse with sinister crash. The cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul alone defied destruction, its four towers standing out majestically amidst the enveloping wreaths of flame. Alzey, Frankenthal, Dürkheim, Wachenheim, Deidesheim, Kreuznach, Bingen, Gernsheim, suffered a similar fate, to say nothing of innumerable villages. When autumn came there were no leaves tinged with russet and gold to herald its advent, for as far as eye could see and ear could hear reigned nothing but ruin and desolation and the ominous silence of death.

No frontiers could stay the progress of this work of devastation, which the French carried into the territories of Treves and Cologne. Here were proud old castles, seemingly invulnerable fortresses, dominating Rhine and Moselle from rugged mountain heights, or overlooking the Ahr valley from precipitous cliffs, or whose turrets, sharply delineated against the sky, rose above the Eifel plateau—Lahnstein and Andernach, Ehrenfels and Schönberg, Rheinfels and Hornberg, Stolzenfels and Lahneck, Rheineck and Hammerstein. All were laid in dust and ashes.

If Elizabeth Charlotte had good reasons for being sad, the Alsatians, when gazing at the mass of ruins accumulated before their eyes in German lands, could be satisfied with an annexation which guaranteed their own safety. Such is at times the irony of fate!

While French generals were thus busy laying fertile regions waste, Louvois provided the Field Army with reinforcements that brought its total strength up to over 200,000 men. The newly created desert rendered operations on the Rhine so difficult for the Germans that France only needed henceforth to defend Alsace and the Breisgau. The bulk of her troops were consequently reserved for an offensive campaign against Holland. The French Armies in Savoy, the Maritime Alps, and the Pyrenees remained on the defensive in order to permit the whole force of the French attack being concentrated on the Spanish and Dutch Netherlands. Louvois believed both the Upper and Middle Rhine to be safe, since Mayence and Bonn were defended by strong French garrisons, and Boufflers held Coblenz—which despite its burning suburbs successfully resisted, under General Count von der Lippe, Vauban's repeated assaults, and would not afford Louis XIV the confidently anticipated pleasure of entering its gates in triumph—in check.

But these military preparations did not suffice Louis. When the hostile alliance was formed against him in the spring of 1689, he retaliated by drawing closer the bonds uniting France to the Sultan, and despatched French staff officers to Turkish headquarters. French and Turks again waged war on two fronts, on the Rhine and the Danube, to further their joint interests.

1689 was thus a highly critical year in European political

history. Germany, sandwiched in between Turkey in the South-East and France in the West, fought both for her own existence and for the cause of Europe. She fought this fight in league with England. William of Orange, who after his succession to England's throne had with lightning-like rapidity grasped her insular standpoint, no longer saw France merely in the light of his native country's most dangerous enemy. For him the main peril henceforth to be averted at all costs lay in France's *supremacy in Europe*, since England's vital interest demanded that the European balance of power should be maintained. Here we reach a decisive turning-point in history. We witness the beginning of a struggle between two great nations, destined to result ultimately in the establishment of British predominance. Hence the predatory war, the third of its kind, provoked by Louis XIV in 1687, came to assume a far wider significance than that monarch originally intended. But notwithstanding this fact the fight for the Rhine lost none of its importance. On the contrary, far from being a mere incidental phase of the general struggle for the European balance of power, the fight for the Rhine in future dominated that struggle and gave it its true meaning. We must bear in mind that the possession of the Rhine by France implies France's supremacy in Europe. For Germany, the Rhine is a vital necessity; for France, a means to the end of assuring her own hegemony. The time had not yet come for this fundamental truth to assume concrete and intelligible shape. Nevertheless, on the one hand, France's designs on the river were already so inseparably bound up with her political ambitions; and, on the other, the instinctive feeling, common to the entire German nation despite all divergencies and centrifugal tendencies, that the Rhine is a German stream and Strasbourg a German citadel, was so deeply embedded in the innermost recesses of the national conscience, that antagonism between France and Germany began to develop henceforth into irreconcilable hereditary enmity. The devastation of 7,500 square miles of land, the destruction of 100 towns and 2,000 villages, furnished this enmity with a durable and solid background of sufficient dimensions to enable even the rudimentary German political instinct to become slowly conscious of it.

The war which now ensued attained its culminating point in a series of bloody battles in the Netherlands and Italy and on the high seas ; and deep and lasting were the wounds which it inflicted on either side. But the chief sufferer was the hapless Rhineland, where no more battles were fought.

Brandenburgian, Saxon, Hessian, Swabian, Bavarian, Austrian, and Dutch troops recaptured those Rhine fortresses which had surrendered owing to the faint-heartedness of their garrisons or the venality of the Fürstenbergs. Duke Charles of Lorraine, who appeared in 1689 before Mayence, compelled this central stronghold of the Rhine basin to capitulate on September 8th. The Elector Frederic III entered Bonn on October 13th with 20,000 Brandenburgians. Neuss, Rheinsberg, and Kaiserswerth reverted to their rightful owners. Towards the end of the year the Lower and Middle Rhine were again in German hands. Marshal Duras arrived too late to relieve Mayence. Only in the desert between the Nahe and the Kintzig was everything quiet, for neither a base nor supplies of any sort were here available for operating Armies, and the Germans were consequently obliged to remain at the Neckar. Hence the French kept the fortresses of Hüningen, Freiburg, Brisach, Strasbourg, and Phillippsburg without so much as a skirmish, and maintained their positions on the Upper Rhine with reduced forces, whereas desperate fighting took place on blood-soaked Flemish soil.

Louis pressed William of Orange hard, both on the Continent and in Ireland. But the latter, who ascended the English throne as a usurper, remained victorious over the House of Stuart, although a French fleet escorted James II to Erin, whose population rallied enthusiastically around him. Spurred by ancient and undying racial hatred, the Gaelic clans flung themselves once more with savage fury on their Germanic overlords, the Anglo-Saxon and Norman settlers. Fierce raged the battle on the Boyne until the Gaels' last dauntless chieftain fell to rise no more.

Scores of thousands of Irish fled into exile, whilst the remorseless victor's hand lay heavily on their unhappy country. The naval success obtained by Admiral de Tourville over the English fleet under Lord Torrington off Beachy Head could not turn the scales in James's favour. None the less it was high time that William III got his hands free in Ireland.

In 1690 Louis's marshals were everywhere victorious, whether in the Netherlands or Savoy or Spain, and had they enjoyed freedom of action and not been tied down to mere "strategic manœuvres," they would certainly have triumphed all along the line. But Louvois, since Turenne's death Louis's omnipotent military adviser, kept a tight hand over them. Turenne's spirit no longer inspired his successor's campaigns. Thus the allied Dutch and Imperial Armies, who under the Prince of Waldeck had crossed the Meuse, were defeated by the dissolute and hunchbacked dwarf Luxemburg at Fleurus on July 1st, 1690. But Luxemburg did not follow up his victory, although it cleared the road to Brussels and Liége, and the Elector Frederic's arrival on the scene re-established the momentarily disturbed equilibrium.

In 1691 Louis personally took over the supreme command on the Walloon theatre of war. Mons fell, but nothing decisive resulted. Louis eluded a battle, not that he was afraid of fighting, but because he was unwilling to expose his royal prestige to the risk of a humiliating defeat. As the French saying went: "il n'avait pas peur de se battre, mais d'être battu." His Majesty therefore returned to Versailles, crowned with the laurels of his victory at Mons, and contented himself with despatching Boufflers against Liége. Boufflers burnt that town to the ground and then withdrew to Dinant, where he placed himself at Luxemburg's orders. Thus the year 1690 came to an end without witnessing any decision in the Netherlands.

In Piedmont, on the other hand, Marshal de Catinat defeated Vittorio Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, at Strafarda. Prince Eugene, who had forsaken the French Court to seek service in Vienna, achieved distinction on this occasion by the intrepidity with which he covered his luckless cousin's retreat. Catinat took Susa and conquered the whole of Savoy. Max Emmanuel of Bavaria, who opposed the French in the devastated zone, hastened to Vittorio Amadeo's assistance, but in vain. Vittorio Amadeo began to turn unostentatiously towards the Sun-King.

Louvois died of apoplexy in 1691, and his death sufficed to change the fortunes of war, hitherto favourable to France. His last notable success as an organizer, namely, the siege of Namur, enabled Louis XIV to add a second

crown of laurels to that earned at Mons. His Majesty returned again in triumph to Mme de Maintenon, and entrusted further operations to Luxemburg, whom he strictly enjoined to avoid the open field. Luxemburg did his best to obey instructions, but was shortly afterwards obliged *nolens volens* by William of Orange to accept a pitched battle. On August 3rd, 1691, the English King surprised him at Steenkirk, where the French Army lay encamped on marshy ground, seeking fodder for its horses. The French successfully withstood William's onslaught and repulsed their assailants with heavy loss, but William took advantage of his antagonist's inactivity to fetch reinforcements amounting to 15,000 men, who had just landed in Ostend, and, with their aid, to capture Furnes and Dixmude. However, on William being summoned to Brussels owing to an unexpected diversion by Boufflers, Luxemburg's troops advanced on the Yser and retook the fallen fortresses. Thus the campaign was reduced to a number of siege operations devoid of any strategic plan, and the only result was a wholly useless waste of life, time, and money ; it dragged out in this way till 1693. During the previous year a decisive event of far-reaching importance had nevertheless occurred elsewhere. On May 29th, 1692, Admiral de Tourville encountered, in foggy weather, the allied English and Dutch fleets off La Hogue, near Cherbourg. The French fought magnificently, but were hopelessly outnumbered, and only a single squadron succeeded in escaping destruction. In honour of this victory a medal was struck in London bearing the inscription : "Thus does England avenge the burning of Worms and Speyer."

The battle of La Hogue sealed the fate of France in the northern waters of Europe for all time. Two years later an English fleet appeared in the Mediterranean and compelled the French forces there to seek shelter at Toulon.

All the more imposing were the efforts made on land by France in 1693. Louis would not admit that he had in any way overestimated his country's strength, and moved heaven and earth to gain the mastery over the allied Armies. He sent his dinner-services and the silver ornaments which decorated the Gallery of Mirrors to be melted at the Mint, indefatigably organized new Armies, and gave injunctions to take the offensive on all theatres of war and to capture the most important enemy strongholds. French troops combated

under Barcelona's walls, before the gates of Liége, at Pignerol and Marsaglia in Savoy, and carried destruction once again into the Rhineland. And everywhere they encountered German detachments, which, however, were not numerous enough to offer successful resistance, since the Empire's best regiments were engaged on the eastern front. In the West the Germans had generally to be content with the *rôle* of auxiliaries in the employ of England or Holland, Spain or Savoy; but they fought none the less, irrespective of race or creed, whether under their own banner or under foreign flags, with conspicuous bravery and bitter resentment, against one and the same implacable foe.

Louis was unable to bring about a decisive battle, clinging as he did to the traditions of Louvois's "strategy of position" and Vauban's art of siege war. Turenne's advice to Condé: "faîtes peu de sièges et donnez beaucoup de combats" was long since forgotten. Even when Luxemburg, on the Flemish theatre of operations, won a memorable victory in the open field, he reaped no strategic advantage from it.

William III's Army was encamped at Neerwinden, with the object of covering Liége, when Luxemburg's troops attacked. Thrice did the French storm the village, and thrice were they driven back, but their onslaught proved too furious to be withstood in the long run. Luxemburg's infantry masses fired continuously as they stormed; immediately in front of the enemy lines they suddenly fixed bayonets—a new weapon—on to their muskets, and together with the pikemen flung themselves into the *mêlée*. William saw himself compelled to withdraw troops from the centre in order to reinforce his right wing, whereupon the centre's resistance broke down. A fourth storming attack was successful, and William beat a hasty retreat behind the village. Luxemburg did not follow in pursuit. He sent couriers to Versailles to announce his victory and request instructions, and received orders to beleaguer Charleroi! No more convincing proof could be adduced of how greatly the meaning and value of battles was ignored in those days. Charleroi's fall, after a prolonged bombardment, put an end to the campaign of 1693 in the Netherlands.

The year 1694 was spent in marches, counter-marches, and cannonades. In 1695 Luxemburg died without having

tried his luck again in the field. The allies pulled themselves together and re-took Namur, but their activity then came to an end. Nor was a decision reached on any other theatre of war—neither on the Po, nor on the Rhine, nor in the Pyrenees. Margrave Louis of Baden, it is true, recaptured the ruins of Heidelberg, but was subsequently forced to retreat on Heilbronn, after an attempt to penetrate through the desert into Alsace between the lines of fortresses had failed. Marshal de Lorges crossed the Rhine, occupied Heidelberg, blew up the bastion—which was still standing—of the castle, and advanced on Heilbronn. But the French were fated to be overcome themselves by the desert, and after suffering considerable losses on the march were obliged to re-cross the Rhine. Margrave Louis followed at their heels, and although outnumbered, succeeded in maintaining his positions on the Neckar and in the Black Forest Passes.

The—originally predatory—war undertaken by Louis in 1688, became in 1695 a defensive war carried on by him against a coalition, the resources of which had meanwhile increased. Writing to the Grand Council about this time, the Venetian Ambassador in Versailles remarked that the French nation's spirits were much depressed owing to France being forced by numerical odds to forgo her warlike triumphs of past days and fall back on the defensive. Although this war of defence was not waged on French soil, but in foreign countries, general lassitude prevailed. Indeed the very fact of its being dragged out at such a distance was calculated to engender weariness. True, the French citizen saw war trophies galore in Notre Dame, but he perceived no enemy; his martial ardour was not roused by the tramp of invaders, by the spectacle of hordes advancing from without into French territory; he only groaned under an intolerable burden of taxation, deplored a total paralysis of trade, mourned over incalculably heavy sacrifices incurred. Contrariwise the Allies' determination was heightened precisely by the knowledge that the French were conducting a war of defence on allied soil, in Germany and Flanders, by the sight of their ruined homesteads and devastated areas. A defensive war invariably assumes a far more provocative aspect when waged on conquered territory than when carried on in the defenders' own land.

France's staying power grew less and the mind of the French nation was troubled. Thinking men began to reflect that political morality ran the risk of being discredited by Louis's lust of domination. A wave of pacifism swept over French society, which had lost, concurrently with its faith in victory, its taste for war. Fénelon, now tutor of the royal grandchildren, composed on behalf of the intelligentsia an anonymous letter to his Majesty, in which he adjured the latter to renounce all desire of vain conquests, spoke about the distress of an exhausted and depopulated country, and exhorted the Most Christian King to reflect on these grave matters. Fénelon's letter circulated from hand to hand and met with unanimous approbation.

As long as fortune smiled on Louis, nothing disturbed the tranquillity of his courtiers' conscience. Now they awoke to a sense of reality and discovered that victory's tide had turned. This discovery converted them to a sudden appreciation of the blessings of peace. It must not, however, be supposed that their political principles changed and that they became disciples of a pacifist creed. No, France just simply wearied of making sacrifices for which no compensation seemed likely. Louis at first remained obdurate. But if no mere rhetoric could dissuade him from continuing hostilities, he was nevertheless sufficiently astute to recognize that the disparity of numbers was too great to admit of his pursuing indefinitely a war which had long since ceased to have any tangible connection either with his brother's claims in the Palatinate or with the question of the succession to the Archbishopric of Cologne, and which threatened to fetter his movements at the precise moment when an infinitely more momentous problem—namely, that of the succession to the Spanish throne—was about to become acute. For this reason Louis desired peace. He did not, however, seek to bring it about by withdrawing his Armies from foreign soil and following Fénelon's advice, but by transferring the struggle to the diplomatic sphere.

Louis's nimble mind easily found the appropriate means for dislocating the enemy alliance. To his weakest opponent, Vittorio Amadeo of Savoy, he proposed a favourable settlement, gave him back Pignerol and Casale on condition that their fortifications be razed, and requested the hand of the Duke's

daughter in marriage for his own grandson, the Duke of Burgundy. Louis's well-aimed arrow thus pierced the most vulnerable spot in his adversaries' armour. Having assured himself of Vittorio Amadeo's complaisance, he proceeded to seduce Sweden, formerly his faithful client, with alluring suggestions of a mediation between France and England. King Charles XI readily responded to these proposals, being eager to prove his gratitude for the services rendered his country by France at Oliva and St. Germain-en-Laye, and to consolidate Sweden's international position.

William III of England was likewise ready to negotiate. From the point of view of British interests the war had lost its *raison d'être*, seeing that France's attacking power was broken, her fleet decisively beaten, and the danger of a Jacobite restoration removed. Louis recognized William as rightful King of England, and undertook to abstain from all further support of the Stuarts and Ireland—unquestionably the greatest renunciation to which he consented. Holland followed in England's wake in order to obtain a favourable commercial agreement. Thanks to William III's efforts an additional clause was inserted in the treaty, conceding to Holland the right to occupy seven fortresses in Flanders so as to protect her frontier more effectively against France.

Louis treated Charles II of Spain with marked benevolence, and gave back to him both Barcelona and Luxemburg. Louis aimed at currying favour with the Spanish people and their dying King; and he shrewdly intended drawing profit from his well-timed considerateness on the fast approaching day when the Spanish throne should become vacant. For this reason also he partially restored the Duchy of Lorraine to its dynasty of warriors, France reserving to herself the right of passage to the Rhine, and retaining possession of Longwy and the bridgehead of Saarlouis.

The Emperor Leopold I recovered Brisach and Freiburg, but not Strasbourg, despite the protests of the Swabians and Margrave Louis of Baden, who wrote the prophetic words: "In German hands Strasbourg does but serve the purpose of permanently guaranteeing peace; whereas in French hands it is a sally-port on our open flank."

Since Louis was henceforth deprived of access to the

Black Forest Passes, he strengthened his attacking positions on the northern frontiers of Alsace. Under the terms of the treaty France kept the whole of this country, including all "reunited" territory. Not being deterred by any precisely worded paragraphs, she proceeded to establish herself still more firmly in the Palatinate. The fortress of Philippsburg was razed. Through the medium of the Reichstag, the Palatinate towns vainly demanded an indemnity for the devastation of their land. Louis refused all reparation, and was strong enough to be able to persist in his refusal, although the devastations had been condemned by the whole civilized world, and although the damage done in Speyer alone amounted to 3,334,000 guilders. His Most Christian Majesty even managed to obtain some hundreds of thousands of louis d'or for Elizabeth Charlotte in settlement of her claim. The dispute regarding the see of Cologne was settled in favour of the Wittelsbach Prince Joseph Clement, the rival of Louis's creature, Francis Egon von Fürstenberg, whose pretensions to the Archbishopric Louis dropped, compensating his friend by lavish hospitality in Paris, where Francis Egon died in 1702.

Louis would have liked to espouse the Sultan's cause, but the Commander of the Faithful was too proud to participate in the peace negotiations, which took place amidst much pomp at Ryswyk Castle in 1697. His obstinacy proved fatal to him. Shortly afterwards Prince Eugene routed his best Army at Zenta, where the Turks lost 30,000 men. Two years later Turkey saw herself compelled to sign the humiliating Peace of Carlowitz.

The Treaty of Ryswyk was concluded at the Holy Roman Empire's expense. The French retired, it is true, to the left bank of the Rhine; but they were now able definitely to take root there under the protection of duly acquired treaty rights, the Reichstag being henceforth powerless to utter a word of protest against their presence. The French thus interpreted once more the Peace of Westphalia according to their own wishes. Louis was in no hurry to withdraw his troops from the right bank, and in 1701 they still occupied Brisach. Meanwhile a formidable new fortress had been erected by Vauban's genius, immediately facing what the French now renamed Old Brisach; and its architect caused a canal to be dug for the

purpose of transporting, from the Vosges to the Rhine, the stones with which he constructed his new stronghold.

If the Treaty of Ryswyk frustrated Louis's endeavours to establish his hegemony in Europe, it did not deprive him of the fruits of his campaigns on the Rhine. Viewing things from a military standpoint, it may be said that the French Armies entrenched themselves in advanced positions on the right bank in order to cover and maintain their base of operations on the left bank, and that they tricked their adversaries diplomatically by abandoning Freiburg and the bridgeheads and retreating on Strasbourg. The result was to secure for France uncontested possession of Alsace and the Southern Palatinate. Louis XIV bequeathed his country this example of masterly political generalship as a model lesson in the art of waging future struggles for the Rhine.

The wider issues opened out, in 1701, by the question of the Spanish succession—which conjured up, for the Germano-Romanic peoples of both hemispheres, the first World War—might momentarily obscure the Rhenish conflict, but could not absorb it. For if there was a change of front, there was no change in French policy.

In November 1700 King Charles II of Spain sank, embittered and grief-stricken, into his grave, after witnessing the spectacle of would-be heirs greedily dividing his patrimony. There were three such heirs. The Houses of Austria and France alike counted Philip II among their ancestors; and since the daughter of Emperor Leopold I and Infanta Margareta Theresa had married Elector Max Emmanuel of Bavaria, Spanish blood flowed likewise in the veins of the latter's son, Joseph, to whom his father transferred the paternal claim to part of Charles II's legacy. William III of England, as intermediary, was anxious to divide the spoils in such a way as to maintain the balance between France and Austria, and for this purpose skilfully made use of Joseph's rights. But this young Prince died before any concrete proposal could be formulated. Henceforth the only remaining competitors were the Austrian, Leopold's son, and the Frenchman, Louis XIV's grandson. The heritage consisted of Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, the Two Sicilies, Milan, and the Spanish possessions in America. Charles II altered a first will drawn-up in favour of the Bavarian,

and bequeathed his empire to the most powerful of his heirs, who was also nearest to Spain's frontier.

France's increased military resources, and the dissensions among her rivals, dispensed Louis XIV from any further need to show consideration for others' interests. He therefore promptly accepted the legacy left to his grandson, Philip of Anjou, who thereby became sole heir to the Spanish Crown's entire patrimony. Louis thus repudiated those secret agreements regarding a division of the heritage which had been concluded with William III. Louis aimed at obtaining undivided possession of the spoils. But this implied war with Austria and the Naval Powers.

Louis did not recoil from a fight which found France fully prepared. Her War Minister Chamillard, Louvois's successor, had reorganized her forces since Ryswyk and could place 219 infantry battalions, 57 militia battalions, 29,500 heavy cavalrymen, and 9,500 dragoons—in all 205,300 men—at his sovereign's disposal for the coming war. The artillery had likewise been increased, and the ring of fortresses guarding France's eastern and northern frontiers re-equipped. An alliance with Savoy secured Lombardy. Alpine passes and Burgundian Gate were defended by Swiss troops, whilst newly rigged ships of the French Navy lay in the harbours of Toulon, Cadiz, and Cherbourg ready to put to sea. Louis planned to crush the Empire before the Naval Powers could attack France in the flank. He relied, for carrying out this scheme, on the strongly fortified French base on the Rhine, and on internal dissensions in Germany. All the Lower Rhine fortresses, and also the Upper Rhine bridge-head of Brisach, were in his hands. He reckoned on his regiments reaching Vienna before the Austrians had even completed their preparations, since France possessed a valuable ally in Bavaria, and this would ensure freedom of movement for her Armies on the Danube. Elector Max Emmanuel, resolved to prevent a world domination of the Habsburgs and obtain his share of the Spanish heritage, was France's ally. The House of Wittelsbach, securely seated in Bavaria, the Palatinate, and Cologne, rose against Kaiser and Reich, determined to do its utmost to thwart the Habsburgs' effort to regain their ascendancy in Germany and Spain, and no Imperial ban could deter it from seeking to achieve its

purpose by means of an alliance with Louis XIV. The Archbishop of Cologne, whom Louis had treated so considerately at Ryswyk, followed in his brother's footsteps. The Sun-King thus found willing allies, ready to risk land and crown for the common cause. On the other hand, Elector Frederic III of Brandenburg took in 1701 the title of King of Prussia and was recognized as such by his Imperial suzerain Leopold.

Events succeeded each other with avalanche-like rapidity.

Louis's grandson, provided with ample funds, hastened to Madrid, which he entered in great state as Philip V on January 23rd, 1701. Spain, Milan, Sicily, and the Spanish Netherlands immediately acknowledged this descendant of the mightiest Catholic potentate as their lawful ruler, and scarcely six months after Charles II's demise Europe was placed before a *fait accompli*. The Spanish heritage fell like ripe fruit into the Bourbons' outstretched hands. Since the Emperor Leopold had neglected to come to an agreement with Louis regarding a redistribution of the legacy, he now found himself obliged to fight for the whole without any prospect of ever getting it.

When Louis XIV placed his grandson—a great-grandson of Philip III of Spain's daughter—on the Spanish throne, France crossed the Pyrenees, her natural geographical boundary in the South-West, just as she had crossed, under Louis XIII, her natural frontier in the East marked by the Vosges. Antiquated principles derived from the old Frankish *jus successionis* once more asserted themselves, however incompatible they might be with prevailing tendencies which sought to merge the notion of the sovereign's family possessions into the modern idea of the State—tendencies which, in progressive countries, had already led to the formation of national States. Cognate descent in the third and fourth generations served again as a pretext for satisfying dynastic ambition, and blood and treasure of the peoples of Europe were again the price to be paid for conflicts arising around heritages of kings and their daughters.

In the present conflict Louis was stronger than his Habsburg rivals, for the former's conception of the State had already been realized, whereas if Leopold I was *de facto* German Emperor, the idea of an Austrian State had not yet been substantiated. When Louis transferred the centre of

gravity of his policy to Spain, he only acted conformably with the fundamental traditional axioms underlying French national expansion.

The political attitude adopted by Austria was less clearly outlined. When she withdrew her Armies from the lower course of the Danube and abandoned the war with Turkey, in order to try and obtain for herself the entire Spanish heritage, she renounced creating a homogeneous Austrian State. Following Maximilian's example and turning towards Italy, she not only missed a propitious opportunity for so doing, but exposed herself thereby to the danger of irretrievably splitting up her strength. Germany thus became entangled anew in the interneceine strife of the Romanic world. Thanks to France's consistent, and Austria's inconsistent, policy, the War of the Spanish Succession transformed Western Europe into one vast battlefield; and this allowed Great Britain to retain the mastery over the seas and act as protector and guarantor of the European equilibrium during the next two centuries.

The Continental Powers unwittingly played Great Britain's game and enabled her to keep the balance between them. But owing to the distribution of power in Europe, England was not in a position to undertake this *rôle* otherwise than by participating actively in the war. The forces at Louis XIV's disposal were such as to compel Great Britain to join an anti-French coalition in order to prevent France's already existing predominance in Western Europe from developing into a hegemony over that part of the Continent situated between the Rhine, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Channel, and the southern coast of Sicily. Since Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Russia were at the same time fighting for supremacy in the Baltic Border States and Eastern Europe generally, the Continent was divided up into two parallel groups, each for itself and independently of the other engaged in a war of vast dimensions destined to have far-reaching consequences.

One of the immediate consequences was the disruption of Germany. Saxony was drawn into the vortex of the eastern war, for Elector Frederic Augustus I, after turning Catholic, consented to be elected King of Poland in 1697, whereas Bavaria allied herself with France.

The War of the Spanish Succession was not, at its inception, a coalition war. It originated as Austria's conflict with "Bourbonized" Spain. Louis XIV carefully abstained from any challenge and left his adversaries the odium of throwing down the gauntlet, so as to appear himself merely as champion of his grandson's rights and defender of France's honour and interests, thus creating the impression of being carried along on the crest of a French national wave.

Since Leopold I confined himself at first to declaring war on his Bourbon rival in Madrid, all remained quiet on the Rhine until 1701. Having no direct means of access to the Spanish Netherlands, Leopold decided to strike the first blow at Milan, the only enemy territory which could immediately be reached from Austria's base of operations. Leopold's decision resulted in a successful campaign in Lombardy, but it had also the effect of diverting the war from its main theatre to a secondary one. This gave Louis time to entrench his Armies securely in the Rhineland and the Spanish Netherlands, and to strengthen his moral position.

The Sun-King, however, subordinated strategic considerations to political calculations, and by so doing missed, for the first time, a decisive opportunity. He took the field in Italy as Philip V's second and remained on the defensive, after Marshal Catinat had occupied the Savoy passes, Mantua, and Milan, taken up positions with French and Spanish regiments near Rivoli, and placed troops at the entrance to the passes leading from South Tyrol in order to protect Lombardy's capital. Catinat's measures were reasonable, his positions seemed unassailable, and it looked as if no Austrian Army could force its way through the Tyrolese passes and enter the North Italian plain.

Prince Eugene, however, entrusted by the Emperor with the command over 32,000 tried veterans from the Turkish war, determined under these circumstances to endeavour to traverse the Alps and turn the enemy flank. In the spring of 1701 he accomplished the first part of his plan, reached the Adige, which he crossed at Castellardi, below Verona, repulsed at Carpi detachments charged by Catinat with the defence of the river banks, and captured the strongly fortified bridgehead. Hereupon Catinat concentrated his forces at Villafranca in order to defend the "Mincio line." But Prince

Eugene again baffled the French leader by an audacious march on the latter's left flank, which obliged Catinat to abandon the line in question. Louis XIV, indignant at his Marshal's failure, recalled Catinat, who was superseded by the Marquis de Villeroi, a Court favourite accustomed to fortune's smile. During the interim between Catinat's departure and Villeroi's arrival, Duke Vittorio Amadeo of Savoy took command of the French Army in Piedmont, which now numbered some 52,000 men.

Early in September Marshal Villeroi reached the Oglio, burning with impatience to wipe out old scores, and determined to attack his adversary without delay. He rashly decided on an immediate advance, left his heavy artillery behind, pushed forward with infantry and cavalry against Eugene's positions, and, recollecting a previous experience made by him at Neerwinden, ordered a bayonet charge. But when he saw his infantry repulsed with heavy loss, Villeroi's martial ardour subsided and he withdrew to Cremona, leaving Eugene in undisturbed possession of Guastella, Parma, and Mirandola. Eugene captured the most important bridgeheads and sent cavalry in pursuit. This sudden attack, which found Villeroi wholly unprepared, proved successful. Imperial troops entered Cremona after storming the outer forts, and Villeroi himself was taken prisoner. Louis replaced him by the Duke of Vendôme, a descendant of Henry IV and the beautiful enchantress Gabrielle d'Estrées.

Despite an initial reverse, Marshal Vendôme managed to hold his own against Eugene. At the close of 1702 both generals still stood unbeaten between Mantua and Mirandola. Their strategic moves in Lombardy's plain formed an adequate counterpart to those much admired manœuvres, already described in this chapter, carried out by Turenne and Montecuccoli between Rhine and Tauber. Although no progress was made, Eugene's superior generalship caused the pendulum to oscillate in Leopold's favour. The coalition slowly screwed up courage to challenge France's hegemony.

William III had not yet dared propose a declaration of war on France to Parliament, for England's trade with that country and Spain was flourishing. Louis therefore seized the opportunity to place Holland before an accomplished fact without declaring war on the latter. In February 1701 he

despatched Marshal Boufflers to the Spanish Netherlands with instructions to demand the surrender of all frontier fortresses garrisoned by Dutch troops. Max Emmanuel, Viceroy of the Spanish Netherlands, hastened to consent, whereupon twenty-three Dutch battalions laid down their arms. By a single stroke Louis thus obtained possession of the whole belt of fortresses guarding the northern frontier of that part of the Netherlands which seceded during the Mother Country's struggle for independence. A French Army menaced Holland's southern flank—a danger which Holland was powerless to avert. She could only save herself by recognizing Philip V as King of Spain and appealing to England for aid.

William III's hour now struck. He succeeded in gaining admission to negotiations carried on at The Hague between Dutch and French plenipotentiaries, and in putting Louis at a disadvantage by demanding that Leopold be invited to send representatives to take part in them. A resolution passed by the British Parliament in favour of an alliance between William and Leopold having as its aims to maintain Europe's liberties, safeguard England's interests, and check France's expansion, clarified the political situation. The coming Great Alliance was clearly outlined in this resolution, unanimously voted by Whigs and Tories.

Great Britain took up her historic position, alike in the struggle for the European balance of power and—since the latter was jeopardized not only by Philip V's accession and the union of France and Spain, but also by France's attitude towards Holland and Germany—in the fight for the Rhine.

Louis perceived the trap laid to ensnare him, turned down a proposal to summon a congress which would undoubtedly have broached the burning question of the Spanish succession, and prepared to take the offensive.

In September 1701 the anti-French Alliance was concluded. Impossibility of ever recognizing a dynastic union between France and Spain formed one of its main principles; it likewise admitted the Emperor's right to the hitherto Spanish Netherlands and to his Italian possessions, and most graciously granted the Spanish Crown to Archduke Charles—provided he be able to conquer it. Characteristic of the spirit of the new Alliance was a further proviso that the Naval Powers

should be entitled to those parts of the West Indian colonies which they deemed valuable for their own trade.

Louis XIV's dignity did not permit him to consider whether it might be advisable to seek a compromise with his enemies rather than risk a life-and-death struggle. His ambitious aims extended far beyond the limits set by the Allies. With his mind's eye he already saw himself in possession of those lands which Louis XII and Francis I had vainly struggled to obtain. He perceived Germany's gates opened and the Imperial Crown, so greatly coveted by Capet and Valois alike, within such easy reach that he would only need—with the help of subservient Rhinegraves and Bavaria, and despite the opposition of Brandenburg, Saxony, Bohemia, and Hanover—to stretch out his hand to grasp it after Leopold's death. He saw the glory of Carolingian times revived and Europe under his sceptre's sway, conformably with ancient and carefully fostered French tradition. He saw in his grandson Philip a vassal on Spain's throne. He had visions of an obedient following of Kings and Electors seated at his feet, of Turkey no longer his equal but his subordinate. He hoped to submit Poland, for whose elective crown a French candidate was held in readiness since 1697, to French influence. And on September 17th he took the last decisive step by recognizing his pensioner James III, whose father died in exile at Fontainebleau, as King of England.

This meant war—the first war motivated by conflicts of dimensions so wide that oblivion's veil was soon cast over its immediate cause. France, who had founded colonies on the Mississippi and in the East Indies, fought not only for hegemony in Europe, but for her right to self-assertion beyond its borders. For the first time in history, sea power was destined to exert decisive influence on the shaping of world politics.

The spring of 1702 saw French and Allied Armies drawn up in the Netherlands and on the Rhine. But that dynamic tension necessarily inherent to a struggle conceived on so vast a scale—should warlike operations correspond to political aims and purposes—was still lacking.

Whilst Eugene's and Vendôme's troops were circling around each other in endless flanking manœuvres in Northern Italy; enemy Armies in the Netherlands, on the Moselle, and the

Rhine sought salvation in siege campaigns. John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, who had formerly distinguished himself as freebooter on the German side in the Rhineland, now commanded a British-Dutch-German Army numbering 80,000 men, and faced in the Netherlands a French Army equally numerous under Boufflers. Margrave Louis of Baden confronted Marshal Catinat on the Upper Rhine. Dutch and Prussian troops recaptured, after no little difficulty, Kaiserswerth, Venloo, Roermond, and Liége, which had surrendered so tamely to Boufflers. The latter's present orders obliged him to resort exclusively to methods of trench-warfare, so as to afford the enemy no chance of a pitched battle; military operations consequently flagged on all theatres of war. King Joseph I, Leopold's son and heir, together with numerous other German princes, witnessed Landau's capitulation to Margrave Louis of Baden. Hoping for relief, its defenders, under General Mélac, held out till September 11th. They were granted an honourable retreat, and Mélac himself, despite his equivocal reputation as a devastator of the Palatinate, retired without being in any way molested.

Margrave Louis intended advancing towards the Lauter when tidings from Bavaria retained him. Max Emmanuel, Elector of Bavaria, who up to now had not moved, suddenly tore off his mask, attacked Ulm, and cut off the Imperial Army's communications with Vienna. Margrave Louis turned aside to meet him, whereupon the Duc de Villars, Marshal Catinat's successor, crossed the Rhine at Hüningen and defeated his Margravial Highness at Friedlingen on October 14th. The Margrave nevertheless succeeded in maintaining his position before the Black Forest Passes, thereby compelling Villars—who vainly counted on a Bavarian advance—to re-cross the Rhine. There matters remained, and when 1702 came to an end practically nothing had been accomplished.

The Sun-King now recognized that a continuation of purely defensive tactics might easily prove fatal to him; he decided, therefore, to open an offensive campaign. William III had succumbed, in March 1702, to a fall from his horse, and since Queen Anne displayed no bellicose enthusiasm, Louis could hope to vanquish the Emperor before England threw her whole weight into the struggle. He

accordingly recognized, as we said, James III as King of England, thinking thereby to sow dissension in the British ranks, and took measures in view of launching a vigorous offensive against Austria in 1703.

Max Emmanuel being hard pressed by the Emperor, Louis ordered Villars to cross the Rhine, although his infantry was insufficiently equipped with muskets, one-half being armed solely with pikes. Villars advanced under cover of the fortresses of Hüningen, Brisach, and Strasbourg, whilst the Army of the Moselle, under Marshal Tallard, set out from Treves to rejoin him *via* Metz. With 60,000 men they appeared before the Stollhofen line of fortifications erected by Margrave Louis on the Kintzig. Leaving Tallard at Stollhofen to engage the Margrave, Villars marched up the Kintzig valley, crossed the Black Forest, reached the depression formed by the Danube at Tuttlingen, and joined Max Emmanuel's 30,000 Bavarians at Geislingen. Villars's intention was to push forward up the Danube towards Vienna, but Max Emmanuel, who doubted Tallard's ability to hold Margrave Louis in check, raised objections and suggested co-operation with Vendôme in Northern Italy. Villars agreed, but the plan failed owing to Tyrolese regiments barring the way to French and Bavarians, whereas Vendôme, for his part, got no farther than Trent.

Prince Eugene had meanwhile been recalled from Italy to Vienna and appointed President of the War Cabinet and director-general of military operations. He despatched three Army Corps to Bavaria, whereupon Max Emmanuel retreated on Munich, and Vendôme withdrew once more into Lombardy. On returning from Tyrol into his own country, the Elector saw himself beset on all sides. Imperial Armies were advancing against him along the Danube, from Bohemia, and from Swabia. His cause appeared hopelessly lost. Even Louis XIV doubted whether Max Emmanuel and Villars would be able to extricate themselves from their perilous situation. The idea of a retreat to the Rhine occurred to Villars, where Tallard's forces were still stationed before Stollhofen, facing barely one-third of Margrave Louis's Army, the remainder of the latter having accompanied their Chief to the Danube. But such a retreat was impossible without more or less severe fighting, and to this Villars hesitated to

expose his troops. The Franco-Bavarian forces found themselves threatened with envelopment from two sides. Margrave Louis took Augsburg, and Count Limburg-Styrum pushed forward as far as Höchstädt. In this extremity Max Emmanuel prevailed on Villars to hit out with all their combined strength. The Elector placed himself at the head of his Bavarians, resolved to die if need be. French and Bavarians flung themselves in a solid phalanx on Limburg-Styrum's troops near Höchstädt and sent them flying. Then Villars swung round against Margrave Louis, who, seeing both his front and rear menaced, beat a retreat in the direction of the Main.

Max Emmanuel had overcome the crisis. He immediately attacked Augsburg, which capitulated before the end of the year; and during the autumn and winter he recovered all his other lost towns. When, at the beginning of 1704, he recaptured Passau, "the gate of Austria," and advanced with 14,000 men on Linz, the Emperor saw his hereditary domains menaced, and trembled for Prague and Vienna. Louis XIV, confiding in Max Emmanuel's lucky star, sacrificed Marshal Villars to his impetuous ally, the two being unable to see eye to eye with one another. Louis forthwith placed Marshals Marsin and Tallard at Max Emmanuel's disposal, in order to enable him to strike a decisive blow and dictate peace to Leopold in the latter's capital. As for Villars, he was despatched to the Cevennes to quell a Huguenot uprising.

With feverish haste Vienna armed in expectation of coming events. Austria's situation was aggravated by a Hungarian insurrection in Transylvania, headed by Rakoczy, which menaced her from behind. Prince Eugene's genius, however, roused Austria's latent energies and set far-sighted strategic aims to the measures taken. He succeeded in persuading Marlborough, who led England's war party, to take over the command personally in Bavaria, "the most important theatre of war," and to abandon the Netherlands to their own resources.

When spring came, the allies had concentrated all their main forces in Bavaria, ready to strike a blow in the open field. Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, became mere subsidiary aims. Momentous decisions were not destined to be taken on these outlying theatres of war which Louis, strategically

speaking, preferred, but—as Eugene prophesied—on the Danube's banks, between the Black Forest and Bohemia. The war's progress conformed to a strategic law, according to which he who dominates the Upper Rhine is enabled to carry operations from the Rhine basin eastwards into the territory where those rivers that flow towards the East take their rise.

In 1704 both parties concentrated their Armies, hitherto scattered, between the Black Forest and Bohemia. Leaving his German auxiliaries to occupy the Netherlands, Marlborough marched up the Rhine with 20,000 English troops, and joined hands at Mayence with Margrave Louis of Baden, whilst Prince Eugene modestly volunteered to tie up the French Rhine Army before Stollhofen. Marlborough's advance on the Rhine, and Eugene's simultaneous appearance there, put everyone in motion. Max Emmanuel withdrew from Linz to Regensburg, seeking to unite with Marsin, who still occupied Augsburg. But Marsin himself retreated hastily to the Danube's source, where he was reinforced by detachments sent by Marshal Tallard through the Black Forest Passes to Villingen. Thanks to these reinforcements Marsin continued his retreat without let or hindrance. Meanwhile Marshal de Coigny led the Army of the Moselle from Treves into the Palatinate, and joined Villeroi—whom Louis XIV had ransomed from Austrian captivity—at Landau.

On Marlborough's Army drawing near, Tallard likewise marched towards Landau. Three Marshals and 50,000 troops defended Alsace and the plain of the Upper Rhine. But despite their numbers they preferred to avoid a battle, and remained stationary when Marlborough, whose forces, thanks to German reinforcements, now numbered 30,000 men, appeared before the Neckar's mouth. Disregarding the lethargic enemy on his flank, Marlborough pushed forward up the Neckar towards Heilbronn, and on June 22nd got into touch with Margrave Louis of Baden at Geislingen, 60,000 men being thereby united.

But, in the meantime, hands had also been joined on the other side. Margrave Louis neglected to attack Marsin during the latter's retreat from Villingen into Swabia, nor did he interfere with Max Emmanuel. Marsin thus proceeded up the Danube without encountering any obstacle. On July 1st,

1704, 58,000 French and Bavarians were assembled near Ulm.

The next day Marlborough attacked, stormed the Schellenberg, on which Max Emmanuel's troops were entrenched, and sacrificed thousands of men in order to take Donauwörth. The Bavarians retreated after a stubborn resistance.

Louis XIV now spurred on his dilatory Marshals to action, ordered Coigny and Villeroi to attack the fortified Stollhofen line, and despatched Tallard with France's best cavalry regiments to the Danube. The *élite* of French aristocracy rode behind Tallard through the Black Forest, whilst Villeroi remained at Stollhofen and Coigny menaced the Palatinate. On hearing of Tallard's march, Prince Eugene left Stollhofen in pursuit. He arrived too late to prevent Tallard reaching the Danube plain, but in time to force a decisive battle.

Margrave Louis was told off to besiege Ingolstadt, whereas Prince Eugene and Marlborough advanced against the combined forces of Max Emmanuel, Marsin, and Tallard. In view of the danger Max Emmanuel decided to defend the threatened fortresses with the bulk of his Bavarian Army, and brought only a small number of troops to his French colleagues' assistance in the open field. French and Bavarians together numbered 56,000 men with 90 guns, their adversaries 51,000 men with 52 guns. On August 13th, 1704, the anticipated battle took place on the Danube's left bank, between Höchstädt and Donauwörth. It was the greatest of this war in which France staked her supremacy in Europe, but it was not fought on the Rhine.

If, however, the Rhine was geographically distant, its possession remained none the less the ultimate cause at issue at Blenheim and Höchstädt. England now understood that any possibility of establishing even a partial European equilibrium must depend on France being compelled to withdraw behind the Rhine.

A marshy streamlet, the Nebelbach by name, flows sluggishly from the Eichberg in a south-easterly direction, past the villages of Lutzingen, Oberglaubheim, and Unterglaubheim, into the Danube, which it enters at Blenheim. It was a misty morning when the enemy Armies arose to measure their strength. Behind the Nebelbach, French and Bavarians,

their front turned towards the North-East, awaited the foe, advancing from Kesselbach. They had selected their position well.

Tallard's Army formed the right wing of the combined Franco-Bavarian front. Of this Army 27 infantry battalions and a number of dismounted dragoons—in all 14,000 men—were assembled on the right and occupied Blenheim. Tallard's cavalry, numbering 44 squadrons and supported by only 9 infantry battalions, was marshalled on the left, some hundred paces behind the Nebelbach, in a line stretching to Oberglaubheim. Marsin's and the Elector's divisions stood still farther to the left, between Oberglaubheim and Lutzingen. Marsin had likewise pushed forward his cavalry, 60 squadrons strong, to the level ground of the meadows behind the streamlet, whilst concentrating the mass of his infantry, 37 battalions, on the left wing around Lutzingen. Oberglaubheim, the "point of refraction" of the whole Franco-Bavarian front, formed a salient held by infantry and dismounted cavalry. In the line of battle the Elector of Bavaria's forces, 15 infantry battalions and 23 cavalry squadrons, were drawn up alongside of Marsin's as far as the slopes of the Eichberg, and covered Marsin's open flank.

Tallard relied on the strength of his defensive position, the two fixed poles of which were Blenheim and Lutzingen; and on his cavalrymen in the centre, expert marksmen and thoroughly trained in the art of attacking. His cavalry, 104 squadrons strong, was posted far enough behind the Nebelbach to be able, by dint of well-aimed volleys, to impede any enemy attempts to cross that streamlet; and, should an attempt nevertheless succeed, to immediately charge the assailants and hurl them back. The fact that the villages, especially Blenheim, were crowded to overflowing, did not in any way affect Tallard's calculations.

When the fog overhanging the Danube, which concealed the allies' movements, lifted, both adversaries were ready. Artillery fire opened at nine o'clock, and about midday Marlborough and Prince Eugene advanced against the widely deployed Franco-Bavarian front. Branching-off to the right, Prince Eugene, with 18 battalions and 78 squadrons, flung himself on the Elector's and Marsin's divisions and attempted to turn their flank, whilst Marlborough, with 46 battalions

and 80 squadrons, attacked Tallard directly. Both applied themselves with especial vigour to crumpling-up the enemy's right wing, so as to cross the streamlet as rapidly as possible. Prince Eugene met with determined resistance and did not get to close quarters till three o'clock. The defenders drove their assailants from the slopes of the Eichberg, and prevented them by infantry fire from approaching Lutzingen. Prince Eugene then moved farther towards the enemy's right and brought Imperial cavalry into the centre of the battlefield, where Marlborough was preparing a decisive thrust. Marsin and Tallard were both so hotly attacked that neither could go to the other's aid. Tallard fought with remarkable skill. General Clérambault held Blenheim with 14,000 men against a British storming party 12,000 strong under General Cutts; the assailants were unequal to their opponents in hand-to-hand fighting in the village streets, and were repulsed with heavy loss. Marlborough then concentrated his squadrons at Unterglaubheim, his aim being to break through Tallard's front. The French cavalry, reinforced by the nine infantry battalions attached to it, awaited the attack in its positions near Oberglaubheim and on the slightly rising ground behind the Nebelbach. Tallard saw the enemy cavalry ford the streamlet under cover of batteries lying east of Unterglaubheim; he watched it drive back his scouts and make ready to charge. Blenheim and Oberglaubheim had been laid in ashes, and all around the air was thick with the smell and smoke of powder and burning ruins.

Tallard appreciated the enemy's strength, but he also confided in his own squadrons' power of resistance. Cuirassiers and dragoons were lined up in echelon order along the meadows, and received the advancing foe with musketry fire. Having discharged the prescribed number of volleys, they charged Marlborough's storming troops with the sword. But their fire proved ineffective, and the force of impact of their attack was diminished owing to loss of time unavoidably caused by the preliminary shooting. The British horsemen made no use of firearms, but rushed in headlong gallop over the soft ground of the meadows, and bore down in a compact mass on the French, whose ranks were already becoming unbalanced. Far and wide resounded the din of battle.

Meanwhile Prince Eugene was engaged in deadly combat with Marsin and Elector Max Emmanuel before Lutzingen. Fierce street fighting, desperate cavalry encounters, surged to and fro. Eugene despatched reinforcements against Oberglaubheim, in order to dislocate the axis of the French front. At the Eichberg and Lutzingen, where the Prince of Dessau led Prussian infantry to the attack, Elector Max Emmanuel, realizing the historic importance of the moment, threw himself heroically into the fray. France's sons likewise did full credit to their reputation for prowess and derring-do. Their decimated squadrons invariably re-formed themselves under cover of infantry fire and undauntedly faced the foe, and their village garrisons did not yield an inch. A new charge by Tallard pushed back Marlborough's troops, exposed as they were to a flanking fire from Blenheim, towards the Nebelbach. But the French onslaught was, in its turn, checked by enemy cross-fire from Unterglaubheim and the approaches to Blenheim, which the British held. In vain did Tallard bring up reinforcements consisting of nine infantry battalions and 1,500 dismounted dragoons, hitherto kept in reserve. Their fire was wholly insufficient to be of effective assistance. After a furious grapple Tallard's cavalry recoiled in disorder. Two Bavarian cuirassier regiments recommenced the struggle. Attack and counter-attack succeeded each other without respite, until the impetus of the charging British and Prussian squadrons broke the French cavalry's resistance, and it retired upstream towards Sondersheim. Marshal Tallard did his utmost to bring his retreating troops to a standstill, threw himself with his Staff into the *mèlée*, steadied the wavering ranks, and attacked again.

Although Tallard despaired of victory, he resolved to try and enable his infantry to cut its way out of Blenheim, which it had unflinchingly defended, but where it was now encompassed on all sides. But he had overtaxed his soldiers' strength. Marlborough's repeated charges had torn up their ranks, and the French cavalry was at last completely scattered. Tallard vainly endeavoured to force an entry into Blenheim, so as to set his imprisoned infantry free. Twice wounded, he was himself captured, and Hessian dragoons chased his bodyguard in the direction of Sondersheim. What remained

of his cavalry escaped upstream *via* Höchstädt, his artillery fell into the enemy's hands, his infantry remained surrounded in Blenheim.

After breaking through the French centre Marlborough turned his attention to this village, and left Prince Eugene to settle Marsin. Just as the latter paid no heed to Tallard, Marlborough now forgot his own colleague, who had nevertheless provided him with all such reinforcements as he, Eugene, could possibly spare from the operations at Lutzingen, where heavy fighting was still in progress.

While Marlborough compelled Tallard's infantry, boxed up in Blenheim, to capitulate, Eugene's German regiments stormed the Eichberg and Lutzingen. The Prince's 18 battalions and 57 squadrons were outnumbered by more than two to one. His task was to tie up Marsin's Army at any price in order to permit of Marlborough's breaking through the enemy centre; but at first it seemed improbable that he could hold his own. Like Tallard, he placed himself at the head of his tired squadrons, which had been driven by French cavalry from the battlefield, and which he urged on again by his example. Tallard's left wing having been routed and Oberglaubheim captured, Bavarians and French concentrated their forces around Lutzingen, where Eugene brought all his available resources to bear against them. But the well-fortified village, skilfully and tenaciously defended by Elector Max Emmanuel and Marsin, defied every attempt to storm it, until a first breach was made in the defenders' ranks by a bayonet charge of ten Brandenburgian and Prussian battalions under Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau. Lutzingen finally fell. Max Emmanuel and Marsin fled in night's darkness towards the Black Forest with remnants of the greatest Army ever sent by Louis XIV across the Rhine.

Their triumph cost Eugene and Marlborough no less than 14,000 men, or one-fourth of their total fighting strength. As for the vanquished, they left 17,000 dead and wounded on the battlefield, and 11,000 prisoners and 44 cannons in enemy hands. The entire French nobility was plunged into mourning, and during three days Versailles and its palace appeared deserted. Prince Eugene wrote an impressive report on the "battle of Blenheim"—which in reality should be called "battle of Höchstädt"—in which he generously awarded

victory's palm, not to his own strategy, but to Marlborough's tactics.

From a strategic viewpoint the battle of Höchstädt decided the War of the Spanish Succession to France's disadvantage. Had the Allies' cavalry immediately started in pursuit, Marsin's fleeing battalions and squadrons would have been overtaken ere they reached the Black Forest Passes, and either exterminated or forced to surrender. But the old time-honoured "principle of annihilation," which had sunk into oblivion and now resuscitated, was as yet insufficiently developed. The failure of the Allies to follow-up their victory diminished its effects and prolonged hostilities. The Allies achieved that victory by putting forth all their strength; but instead of being the starting-point of a new and energetic offensive having Paris as ultimate goal, Blenheim remained a mere landmark indicating the date on which Louis XIV's proverbial luck forsook him and the theatre of war was transferred from the Danube to the Rhine.

Evil tidings of defeat silenced satire at an unlucky general's expense, in Paris a favourite pastime of shallow and superficial minds. A national misfortune had befallen France. But precisely on this account no pacifistic tendency revealed itself, such as we witnessed ten years previously, when another war dragged on indefinitely from siege to siege and devastation to devastation. Not for an instant did Louis depart from his dignified calm, and France followed his example, made fresh sacrifices of men and money, and prepared to defend—on the Rhine, the Po, the Meuse, the high seas, in the mountains of Catalonia—her frontiers, her hegemony, and Philip of Anjou's cause.

She proved unlucky at sea, where England maintained her supremacy, beat France's fleet off Malaga, and captured Gibraltar by a bold stroke. In Italy Vendôme and Guido von Stahremberg sought to outrival each other in marches and counter-marches, while Duke Vittorio Amadeo of Savoy, now Austria's ally, defended Turin. In Flanders, Louis's generals held their own against Dutch and Germans. On the Rhine, French troops withdrew from Landau to the opposite bank of the Saar, only to find themselves, at the end of 1704, pushed back over the Moselle. Landau, Treves, and Trarbach were taken by the Allies. When Leopold I died on May 1st,

1705, being succeeded as Emperor by his son Joseph I, Louis's Armies were already defending Lille and Strasbourg. The position of the French on the Upper Rhine was threatened by an enemy advance against their Moselle flank.

Louis vainly sought assistance from Charles XII of Sweden. This eccentric and heroic young sovereign, a worthy descendant of the Wittelsbachs, had defeated the Danes in Jutland, the Russians on the Narva, the Saxons at Klissow, and was in Saxony when Louis endeavoured to induce him to abandon the North-Eastern War for that of the Spanish Succession. But instead of falling-in with his Most Christian Majesty's suggestion, Charles compelled in 1705 Augustus the Strong, who since 1697 wore Poland's elective crown, to renounce all claim to it, and then set out anew against Peter the Great. Behind Charles the curtain fell on the Western world, before him another one rose, revealing a vista of boundless Eastern horizons. He beheld visions of Moscow and the Ukraine. This tempted his ambition, and he consequently left Louis XIV to his own unaided resources.

On May 23rd, 1706, Villeroi was decisively defeated by Marlborough at Ramilie; shortly afterwards, on September 7th, Marsin fell in battle near Turin and Prince Eugene routed his Army; in consequence of these disasters the last outworks of France's powerful central position collapsed. Eugene became master of all Italy, drove what remained of French Armies across the Maritime Alps, and only paused in his victorious course when confronted by Vendôme's numerically superior forces. Even in Spain the Habsburgs' cause prospered, if only for a brief period. In June 1706 British and Portuguese troops paved a way for Archduke Charles to Puerto del Sol, and Charles entered Madrid as King. But a French Army under Marshal Berwick, James II of England's illegitimate son, soon put an end to this short-lived triumph at the battle of Almansor; and on April 25th, 1707, Philip of Anjou was reseated on his throne.

Louis XIV clearly saw the urgent necessity of endeavouring to conclude a satisfactory peace. If his grandson kept Spain and Naples, and if France retained her hold over the Rhine and the fortresses in Flanders, this, in Louis's opinion, must be accounted sufficient profit under the circumstances. But

an attempt to start negotiations failed and hostilities continued.

The last important military decisions were taken in Flanders. Prince Eugene and Marlborough advanced by way of the Scheldt Gate on Lille and Douai. Lille was obliged to capitulate to Austria's general, and only Vauban's citadel held out. But artificial manoeuvres once more muddled an otherwise clear situation, and not until after the battle of Oudenaarde on July 11th, 1708, in which the combined Austrian and British forces were victorious, did the Allies recover possession of Flanders.

Louis again proffered peace offers to the maritime Powers and Austria, but the allied triumvirate—Marlborough, the Dutchman Heinsius, and Prince Eugene—raised difficulties. They required first and foremost that Louis should sacrifice Philip of Anjou's pretensions to the Spanish Crown; with considerably less insistence did they demand Louis's renunciation of all claims to the Rhine frontier—a renunciation which would have effectually dissipated Germany's perpetual nightmare. Louis's pride, however, forbade his even discussing conditions regarded by him as humiliating, and he broke off negotiations.

Prince Eugene and Marlborough advanced between the Sambre and Scheldt in a southerly direction, in order to gain control of the Somme basin and threaten the heart of France. But, falling back into the ancient errors of siege warfare, they wasted time before Tournai and Mons, and on September 11th, 1709, came into collision with Marshal Villars, who awaited them with 81,000 men and 80 guns at Malplaquet, between the woods of Sars and Blangies. The allied Armies numbered 117,000 men, and had 120 guns at their disposal. With 75 guns Eugene attacked the French left wing, and at the head of 40 battalions forced an entry into Blangies wood. Marlborough meanwhile, who was grappling with Villars' right wing, made no progress. Both sides suffered tremendous loss. Villars perceived his left wing gradually yielding to pressure and his centre exposed to a flanking attack, whereupon he withdrew 30 battalions from the centre and flung them against the Imperials. In desperate hand-to-hand fighting they slowly drove their aggressors from the wood, whereby Villars himself was severely

wounded. Marshal Boufflers took over the command, but proved unable to avert the crisis, for Prince Eugene succeeded by his rapid moves in regaining the ascendancy. Before Boufflers could close the gap in the centre, a vigorous enemy thrust cleft the French Army in twain. Marlborough followed Eugene's example and widened the breach by an attack of his reinforced right wing. This sealed the French Army's fate. Eugene drove its left wing before him towards Valenciennes, Marlborough its right wing towards Quesnoy.

If, this time also, there was no pursuit, it was due to the victors having lost no fewer than 21,000 men, whereas the French casualties did not exceed 9,000. Boufflers withdrew, moreover, in perfect order, and his troops kept up a continuous fire to cover their retreat. Under these circumstances Louis again made offers of peace. He reckoned on being obliged to abandon Spain and his oversea possessions, anticipated danger for the "reunited" territories, and resolved to accept, on his grandson Philip's behalf, Naples as compensation.

But the "Jingoes" among the Allies seemed bent on frustrating every possibility of peace. They demanded that Louis should not only forgo all claims to Spain for himself and Philip, but also send French troops to expel his own grandson from that country.

When England, Austria, and Holland put forward this preposterous demand, they in reality overlooked the Rhenish problem. The Allies, it is true, gave Louis to understand that they would require the "reunited" territories to be restored to their former owners and insist on an "authentic" interpretation of the Treaty of Westphalia. But, as a matter of fact, they were staking their resources on a new horse, although aware that the coalition was growing stale and that they had overshot the mark. They nevertheless light-heartedly sacrificed the Rhine at the very moment when France's bid for European hegemony failed and Louis was compelled to resign himself to being in future no more than *primus inter pares*. Holland did so because she knew herself to be securely sheltered behind the belt of fortresses in Spanish Flanders, and because she had concluded a secret convention with England. England, in turn, was prompted by the knowledge that French control over the Rhine did not necessarily collide with her own interests, provided Holland

remained a British glacis safeguarding Great Britain's eastern coast. As for Austria, the Habsburgs had no longer any interest in the Rhineland, and were anxious to extend their family domains in Eastern Europe, whilst hoping to obtain Lombardy with Milan as well.

Louis replied to the Allies' proposals by causing them to be read aloud from every pulpit throughout France, calling out his last reserves, and declaring that "if it must be war, then I will sooner wage it against my enemies than against my own children."

He ordered Vendôme to Spain, where Philip was hard pressed by an Imperial Army supported by German and Portuguese mercenaries in English pay. On December 10th, 1710, Vendôme's French and Spanish troops saved Philip's throne again in the battle of Villaviciosa.

But Marlborough's fall, which occurred about this time, dealt an even more severe blow at the Allies' cause, for it entailed the coalition's final collapse. England desired to regain her freedom of action in order to ensure for herself her share of the spoils—namely, control of the Channel, possession of Gibraltar and Minorca, extensive trading privileges as regards Spain and France, dismantling of the fortifications of Dunkerque. She therefore resolved to abandon a constellation which could offer her no further advantages, now that the "balance of power" was secured. When Kaiser Joseph I died of smallpox on April 17th, 1711, and was succeeded by the Habsburg pretendent to Spain's throne, who took the Imperial title of Charles VI, it seemed possible that Charles V's empire of yore might resuscitate some day. England consequently hastened to make peace with her weakened French adversary.

Louis breathed more freely. He had succeeded with no little difficulty in drawing out the war; he had seen the Dauphin carried off by smallpox three days before the Emperor succumbed to that same dread disease; and he now required Philip to opt either for the Spanish or the French throne. Philip, a man of refined character, who had long since become a Spaniard by adoption, chose the Escorial. He only wished to live and die in Spain, and he readily sacrificed to the principle of the balance of power his rights and those of his heirs to France's Crown. England immediately proffered her good

services with a view to reconciling Louis and the erstwhile coalition, the result being that peace was signed at Utrecht on April 11th, 1713, between Holland, Savoy, and Spain on the one hand, and France on the other.

Kaiser and Reich took no part in these negotiations. Neglecting Prince Eugene's counsels, Charles VI decided to continue hostilities for the sake of a phantom—the dynastic reunion of Spain and Austria.

Villars and Prince Eugene again moved forward, but on the German side the best contingents were lacking. Prussia, whose troops displayed unsurpassed courage at Höchstädt and Turin, on the ramparts of Toulon and Lille, was unjustly neglected at Utrecht. She now stood facing North and East, her attention diverted from the Rhine, fighting for possession of Pomerania and the Baltic shores. Owing to Charles XII's adventurous expedition to the Steppes, his defeat at Poltava, and Russia's rise under Peter the Great, the North-Eastern War assumed dimensions exceeding those of the Western one. It ended, after Charles XII's premature death, with Sweden's renunciation of all her claims to German estuaries and to the rank of European Great Power.

Prince Eugene urged Kaiser Karl to make peace, but Charles VI only consented to do so when the Rhine campaign had reached a state of almost complete torpescence, and Austria saw herself abandoned by all her former friends. In March, 1714 he concluded a treaty with Spain which awarded Milan, Naples, and the Spanish Netherlands—much reduced in size—to Austria, whilst leaving Holland's right to keep garrisons in the border fortresses unimpaired. This event marks Austria's definite renunciation of the Rhine. She only kept the Hispano-Dutch enclave in the hope of being able to exchange it at some future date for a more favourably situated territory, and became henceforth a Slavo-Romanic Power whose cohesion was assured by those German elements of her population which predominated in the Army and the bureaucracy.

On September 7th, 1714, the German Empire likewise came to terms with France. Louis kept Alsace and obtained the fortress of Landau. He successfully insisted that the Imperial ban placed on Elector Max Emmanuel of Bavaria be rescinded, and the Elector authorized to return home. Possibly Max

Emmanuel was not eager to get back after the sorry failure of his policy, but owing to Charles VI's lackadaisical methods of negotiation a proposal to exchange Bavaria for the Spanish Netherlands fell through. The Wittelsbachs thus remained in possession of their ancestral land.

Although Louis did not win the war, he none the less maintained *that* position in Europe which France needed in order to assure her predominance in days to come. France kept the Rhône region and the passes of the Maritime Alps. She could afford to tolerate Savoy's and Piedmont's neighbourhood, the vicinity of the Habsburg-ruled Netherlands, and the defenceless Duchy of Lorraine, for two excellent reasons—firstly, because her hold on Lille, Strasbourg, Landau, and Alsace strengthened her position in Flanders and on the Rhine; secondly, because the foundation of a Bourbon dynasty beyond the Pyrenees removed, as far as human foresight could judge, all danger of France being threatened in the rear when she resumed her momentarily interrupted activities on her eastern frontier. The harvest which France reaped by the Treaty of Westphalia and the subsequent "reunion" of territories west of the Rhine was at last safely stored away. The Palatinate, the Archdioceses of Mayence, Treves, and Cologne were for all practical purposes, albeit unofficially, under French protection and patronage.

As yet Great Britain insufficiently realized the bearing of these facts.

On September 1st, 1715, Louis the Great died, leaving his sceptre to an infant great-grandson, the Regency being confided to Duke Philip of Orleans, Elizabeth Charlotte's son and Louis XIV's nephew. But if the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze* came to an end with that monarch's demise, not so France's claim to the Rhine and to predominance in Europe.

Although the German Empire was fast breaking-up into a number of territorial States, and notwithstanding the egotistical policy of its princes, the conviction continued to prevail in Germany that she had been treated with gross injustice at Nymwegen, Ryswyk, and Utrecht. Germany knew herself to be still menaced by French expansionist aspirations; she knew that her interests were unfairly sacrificed by England, after German blood had been abundantly spilt and German treasure freely spent in order to achieve British aims. The

three Peace Treaties in question were not forgotten by their victims, whose only redress, however, consisted in being able to vent their pent-up feelings in popular witticisms.

Louis XIV had accomplished his task. France's historic aspirations towards the Rhine, which century-old traditions handed down to Richelieu, who, in turn, made of them the pivot and determining factor of French aggrandizement, were, so to speak, codified and definitely laid down for all times by Louis. The impulse he gave his people was so mighty that French imperialism could no longer be bridled. Henceforth the possession of the Rhine was not only an immovable goal of French policy, but also the symbol of that predominance in Europe and the world which France incessantly strove to secure.

No united Germany existed capable of opposing this unyielding will to power. But the devastation of the Palatinate, of Baden-Durlach, of the Rhine region, roused Germany to consciousness of the fact that France was her remorseless foe. This consciousness, however, did not bear any political fruit until Germany arose as a political factor. Only then did grim determination to keep the Rhine —her Rhine—become an integral part of her reasoned—and no longer merely instinctive—will to national existence.

CHAPTER IX

THE INFLUENCE OF FRANCO-BRITISH WORLD RIVALRY AND FREDERIC II'S WARS ON THE RHINE BASIN

Dawn of the eighteenth century—Russia's appearance in the European arena—Enlargement of the problems of the Rhine and the Dardanelles—Germany a rump—Dismemberment of the Rhine basin—Development of Switzerland and Holland—Between Speyer and Cleves—Prussia in the Rhine basin—War of the Polish Succession—The Pragmatic Sanction—Maria Theresa—France obtains Lorraine—Siege of Philippsburg—Prince Eugene and French strategy—Austria loses the Italian campaign—Reserved attitude of England—Russians on the Rhine—France fortifies her positions on the Rhine—Baden as *glacis*—The German national spirit—Frederic William I of Prussia—Frederic II's *Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe*—Cardinal Fleury and Frederic II—First Silesian War—War of the Austrian Succession—Kaiser Albert II—The French offensive—Bavaria and France—The French in Prague—The Austrians in Munich—Frederic II before Vienna—Battle of Chotusitz—Peace of Breslau—France's eastern frontiers—England at war—Battle of Dettingen—Charles of Lorraine in Alsace—Second Silesian war—Peace of Dresden—Battles of Fontenoy, Raucoux, and Culloden—Maurice of Saxony—Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—France's supremacy on the Rhine unimpaired—French expansion and the British balance of power—Hanover: England's vulnerable spot—Franco-British colonial war and Seven Years War—The French on the Weser—Battle of Hastenbeck and Convention of Kloster Seeven—The French in Thuringia—Frederic II on the "inner line"—Soubise and Hildburghausen—Battle of Rosbach—*Déroute totale*—Germany on the eve of a renascence—William Pitt the Elder—Prussia and England—Rosbach and Leuthen—Retreat of the French over the Lower Rhine—Battle of Crefeld—Contades on the Weser—Frederic's *en navette* tactics—The Rhineland as French base of operations—The conquest of America on German battlefields—Battle of Bergen-in-Taunus—Battle of Minden—Colonial warfare—From Kunersdorf to Torgau—The final French campaign on the Weser—Battle of Wilhelmsthal—Franco-British armistice—*Considerations on the German War*—Frederic undefeated—Peace of Hubertusburg—"The last of the Kings"—The beacon of Rosbach—Choiseul—A letter of Mme de Pompadour's.

THE political transformations between the Strait of Gibraltar and the Dnieper, which marked the commencement of the eighteenth century, resulted in the creation of a new Europe. The two gigantic conflicts known to history as

War of the Spanish Succession and North-Eastern War enlarged the system of European States, and caused the frontier of what had hitherto been arbitrarily designed as "Europe" to be pushed back beyond the Dnieper into the unexplored recesses of Russia's steppes.

If there was a solution of continuity between the struggle for the Rhine and the struggle for the Baltic, the fight for the Dardanelles, on the other hand, which towards the close of the seventeenth century had still been waged by Turkey in Hungary's plains, receded ever farther from Germany's south-eastern marches, and gradually confounded itself with the struggle for the Gulf of Finland, the Dnieper region, and the Crimea.

On his return from the battlefields of Flanders and Baden, Prince Eugene hastened to the assistance of Venice. In 1716 he decisively defeated the Turks at Peterwardein, recaptured Belgrade, and annexed the Banate to the Emperor's hereditary domains. Turkey henceforth ceased to be an object of terror for Europe. When Russia, with a tiger-like spring, bounded into the European arena, when Poland collapsed and the Swedes retreated to the Scandinavian peninsula, all the minor rectifications of territorial water limits undertaken by the Houses of Habsburg, Savoy, and Bourbon in the Mediterranean faded into insignificance. A new era dawned, which reckoned with wider measures of space. Although eager to reshape the old order of things, and consequently stretching-out its hands far beyond Europe to remoter parts of this world of ours, the young generation nevertheless proved unable to solve the two polar problems of Europe's historical evolution: namely, the struggle for the Rhine and the struggle for the Dardanelles. The former continued in its ancient form of "wars of succession," without, however, forfeiting a particle of its fundamental importance. Owing to Russia's entry into the circle of European States, the struggle for the Dardanelles developed into a Western problem. Russia's natural impulse towards the open sea, on the one hand, and France's craving for domination on the Rhine, on the other, showed a tendency to complete each other.

Two years after Louis XIV's death Peter the Great despatched an ambassador to Paris with an offer of a Russo-

French alliance. Regent Philip of Orleans declined a proposal entirely contrary to France's Turcophil and Polophil traditions. But the first step towards a *rapprochement* between the two Powers situated on the recently extended European Continent's Eastern and Western periphery respectively had been taken. This step of Peter's was destined to leave a lasting trace.

As an immediate consequence of France's rejection of the Tsar's suggestion, that Continental equilibrium resulting *ad majorem Anglia gloriam* from the War of the Spanish Succession remained. But in the heart of Europe lay Germany, whose territory was rent asunder, and who sought to re-establish at home, by means of a spontaneous process carried-on within a body politic that was merely a rump, a balance between diverging claims and antagonistic forces. For Germany lacked two essential things: sovereign control over the most important centres of German culture, and undivided possession of the Rhine and its adjacent territories.

The Rhine basin was no longer a political and economic unit. The territories at the river's source and estuary were lost; the plain of the Upper Rhine was dismembered and the Middle Rhine menaced.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia, Switzerland had been detached from the Holy Roman Empire, and after a career both brief and heroic found herself compelled to renounce her claims, not only to exaggerated national expansion, but also to all active participation in world politics. Religious dissensions and other internal woes afflicted this small State scarcely less acutely than they did the German Empire. Switzerland had not been involved either in Louis XIV's predatory wars or in the War of the Spanish Succession, and she lay immobilized between her lakes and mountains under the forcible restraint imposed on her by events. Her task consisted in protecting the Alpine passes, the high road across the Burgundian plateau, and the various Rhine crossings between Schaffhausen and Vorallberg. Her surplus male population found occupation as mercenaries in foreign Armies. Conformably with the "traditional friendship" of Louis XI and Louis XIV, Swiss troops entered France's service and kept guard for the Bourbons over Strasbourg's citadel. This afforded a painful spectacle for the Germans.

Switzerland's separation from the Empire did not, however, produce any dire consequences for the latter so long as the Swiss continued to cover the flank of every single one of their neighbours, and to prevent every foreign Army without exception from passing through their territory.

The conception of their country's perpetual neutrality developed within the Swiss during the War of the Spanish Succession as a result of Switzerland being compelled to renounce—as we said—not only all hope of expansion, but also of any active participation in world politics. This neutrality constituted henceforth the basis of Swiss national policy.

Neutrality, nevertheless, did not *per se* provide a guarantee of Switzerland's independence, of her security against covetous neighbours, or of her complete shutting-off against undue foreign influence; consequently it could not relieve her from all anxiety. For interpretation of her neutrality did not depend so much on her own citizens as on Powers situated beyond her borders. The future of no European State was so intimately and indissolubly bound up with the establishment and maintenance of a Continental equilibrium as that of Switzerland. Only on condition that the Great Powers effectively counterbalanced each other could the principle of her neutrality be enforced. In the event of Europe's equilibrium being destroyed, Switzerland necessarily found herself at the mercy of the strongest Power and obliged to depend on the latter's good will. With France's advance on the Rhine, with the weakening of the Holy Roman Empire in consequence of internal feuds, French ascendancy began to cast its shadow also over Switzerland. The luminous rays of the Sun-King's glory, despite their warmth, could not conceal the fact of Switzerland's dependence.

Similar conditions prevailed at the Rhine's estuary. After a period of rapid ascension, Holland had been ousted from her position as a leading Power. Her plutocratic Government succeeded in maintaining her political independence thanks to the alliance with Great Britain, but it sacrificed genuine liberty to economic interests. In order to keep and extend her commercial privileges, Holland willingly continued to let herself be taken in tow by England, as had been the case ever since William of Orange exchanged the Netherlands

for the British Crown. She became England's Continental glacis, thus consoling Britain for the loss of Normandy and the Flemish coast, and permitting Albion to apply her whole strength and energy to the congenial task of developing her naval armaments and building-up a transoceanic empire.

Only between Speyer and Cleves did the Rhine continue to flow through German territory. The Palatinate still lay prostrate in consequence of its devastation; and now that France had pushed forward beyond the Lauter and the Saar it was more exposed to French designs than ever. The Electorate of Mayence found itself in a peculiarly unfavourable position. The strategic importance of the central fortress of Mayence had been so clearly evidenced during recent wars that any breach of European peace necessarily involved a French advance on that bulwark. The Treves Electorate formed a transit-land, since the open Moselle corridor irresistibly tempted French Armies to break through it so as to secure their communications with Cologne and the Osning Passes. Cologne was entirely under French control ever since the Elector Clement and his brother, Max Emmanuel of Bavaria, threw in their lot with France. In the result, this tragic change of front placed the Archbishopric under France's patronage. France's sphere of influence likewise embraced the region between the Palatinate and Neuburg, which the Duchy of Jülich had successfully defended against Prussia.

Prussia, the latest aspirant to power among the German Confederate States, occupied a district on the Lower Rhine adjacent to the Dutch frontier. She had succeeded in retaining possession of the territory of Cleves-Mark-Ravensberg, and to this domain were added Mörs, a hereditary fief of the House of Orange, in 1702, and Geldern, in 1715. In the event of the Palatino-Neuburgian line of the Wittelsbachs becoming extinct, Jülich and Berg would also revert to the Hohenzollerns. By a singular effect of the law of heritage the Hohenzollern likewise exercised sovereign rights as Prince of Neuchâtel at the extreme periphery of the Upper Rhine basin, in the immediate vicinity of the Alps. Neuchâtel was an enclave in Berne's sphere of influence, a remote and isolated spot. Prussia's settlements on either bank of the Lower Rhine, on the contrary, placed her within the circumference of a region in which the

fight for Germany's very existence would henceforth be waged, where the supreme question of Germany's fate relegated all minor rivalries between German princes to the background. But although the War of the Spanish Succession amply demonstrated this fact, it had hitherto attracted no particular attention. Endless tribulations and far-reaching transformations were still necessary before the Germans could grasp a fundamental truth indispensable to their national salvation, and learn to take advantage politically of their tardy comprehension.

The struggle for the Rhine, thus destined to deepen Germany's national consciousness and develop her political knowledge, now re-opened, after a short breathing space.

Already eighteen years after Louis XIV's death Poland's elective throne became vacant, and this afforded France a welcome opportunity to lop-off another of the Western branches of the Imperial tree. The France of Richelieu and Louis the Great, who sought to accomplish her aims by dint of swift and powerful blows "straight from the shoulder," who seized her booty by tiger's bounds and held it with vulture's claws, had vanished. The France of Louis XV and Cardinal Fleury, expert in the art of cunning intrigue, selected methods better adapted to her proclivities. Falsity and scepticism were eminently characteristic of the new era now beginning, but they were invariably clothed in a supremely elegant form. Although the French State's heavy indebtedness adversely affected the cohesion of the French social structure, France's outward appearance was none the less still imposing. Moved by the tremendous impulsion given by the *grand règne*, France continued her Rhenish policy with unabated zeal.

The War of the Polish Succession, which followed that of the Spanish Succession, stood to the latter in much the same relation as a satiric drama to an overpowering tragedy. But it sufficed, nevertheless, to deprive the German Empire of its last remaining nominal possession between Meuse and Moselle—namely, the Duchy of Lorraine.

Poland's Crown had long been a sport of the Great Powers. On the death of Augustus the Strong of Saxony in 1733—whom Charles XII momentarily dethroned at Altranstädt—France immediately pressed the claim of Stanislas Leszczynski, a former competitor of the Saxon's. Cardinal Fleury dis-

tributed money lavishly in Warsaw so as to induce the Polish nobility to vote for France's aged nominee. Louis XV being married to Leszczynski's daughter, this was more than a mere inviting gesture. Notwithstanding the situation thus created, Frederic Augustus, Elector of Saxony, hastened to Poland, secured one half of the votes, assured himself of Russia's aid, and compelled Leszczynski to flee to Prussia. The turn taken by events sorely distressed Emperor Charles VI, who feared an unfavourable reaction on the attitude of the Powers towards the Pragmatic Sanction, by means of which he appointed his daughter Maria Theresa sole heiress alike of his central hereditary domains and of all the House of Habsburg's possessions in the Netherlands and Italy. He judged a new election to be the most effective way of safeguarding his interests, but this counter-move on his part afforded complete satisfaction to none of the contending parties—including the House of Habsburg, whose representatives he bound over to remain neutral.

Already at the beginning of the controversy France found a pretext for accusing the Emperor of having questioned Stanislas Leszczynski's rights, and proceeded forthwith to occupy Lorraine. The objective connection between this occupation and the reasons alleged to justify it did not seem quite clear; but Cardinal Fleury hesitated all the less to act as he did, since Francis Stephen, Duke of Lorraine, was engaged to Maria Theresa. The Court of Versailles rejoiced at the intriguing policy of the octogenarian statesman, who did not recoil from bestowing the struggle for the Rhine as a wedding present on the Emperor's daughter, and who was clever enough to take advantage of complications in Poland to further France's ambitious schemes.

Spain and Vittorio Amadeo of Sardinia admitted Leszczynski's claims, and the Emperor found himself confronted by a new coalition. He recognized the peril, sought allies within the Empire, and came to an understanding with Russia by acknowledging Frederic Augustus of Saxony as King of Poland. Charles reckoned on England's taking sides against France, conformably with her now historic *rôle*, and calculated that the Imperial Army, reinforced by his own household troops, would suffice to hold the Bourbons in check. He therefore declined an alliance with Frederic William I of

Prussia, although the latter offered to send 50,000 troops to his assistance, and contented himself with the contingents furnished by the Empire.

Although in a difficult position, the Reichstag found itself unable to abandon the Emperor once France attacked the Empire. Hence it replied to France's aggression by a declaration of war, to which, however, Cologne, the Palatinate, and Bavaria did not adhere. The Bavarian branch of the Wittelsbachs saw in the Pragmatic Sanction a curtailment of its hereditary rights, and was also inspired by ancient antipathy to the Habsburgs' imperialist tendencies. Prussia, on the other hand, consented, albeit unwillingly, to participate; the Rhine frontier had been violated and Frederic William resolved to do his duty. The Naval Powers abstained, for no British interests were involved, and Holland followed Britain's lead.

The war which broke out in 1733 as a result of this imbroglio proceeded slowly and hesitatingly. The Emperor despatched the bulk of his forces to Italy, whereas Prince Eugene again confronted the French on the Rhine. But, like unto Margrave Louis of Baden in former times, the hero of the Turkish War and the War of the Spanish Succession appeared in the Rhineland as a general without an Army. The French, on the other hand, were long since ready. Marshal Berwick crossed the Rhine on October 11th, 1733, near Strasburg, took Kehl, and plundered and devastated the unfortunate country. Marshal Belle-Isle occupied Lorraine and overran the territory of Treves. Both generals laid heavy contributions on the conquered regions, and hundreds of thousands of livres found their way into Louis XV's coffers.

The small Imperial Army proved powerless against the enemies' overwhelming numerical superiority. When Prince Eugene, borne down by the weight of years, and only the shadow of his former self, appeared on the Neckar in 1734, hoping that his mere name would suffice to intimidate the foe, the Imperials were already on the defensive in Lombardy and scarcely able to maintain their positions on the Rhine. Eugene resorted to the policy of occupying and fortifying the "Ettlinger lines," so as to hinder Berwick's communications on the Upper Rhine and cover the Black Forest Passes. Berwick took advantage

of his own numerical superiority, advanced upstream along the left bank of the Rhine, crossed over to the right bank with divided forces, captured Rastatt, and threatened the "Ettlinger lines" alike in the front and rear. Prince Eugene averted the danger of complete envelopment by retreating on Heilbronn on May 9th. Berwick did not follow in pursuit; instead of doing so, he laid siege to Philippsburg. Meanwhile Marshal Belle-Isle occupied Trarbach, on the Moselle, whereas the Duc de Noailles took up his position before Speyer and broke open the Neckar Gate. After Berwick's death in the trenches, Marshal d'Asfeld assumed the task of conquering Philippsburg. Vainly hoping for relief, General Wuthenau defended the fortress to the uttermost. But although reinforced by the arrival of Swabian and Prussian troops, Prince Eugene felt himself too weak to risk a battle, and, as a matter of fact, scarcely fired a shot. Under these circumstances the French could afford to proceed leisurely with their siege operations, and on July 18th, 1734, Philippsburg capitulated.

Prince Eugene thereupon beat a retreat and pitched his camp on the Neckar's banks. In an interminable series of marches and counter-marches the campaign dragged out to an inglorious end, being marked by devastations reminiscent of Mélac's days. Resorting to his pen, instead of his sword, Prince Eugene wrote as follows to French Headquarters: "Your soldiers not only burn down localities which they have undertaken to protect, but commit atrocities unsurpassed in history. They respect neither churches nor even consecrated Hosts, bind priests naked to doors and window-frames, nail women by their hands to trees, and then outrage them so odiously that they succumb to the ill-treatment. They do not even recoil from mutilating children in the most barbarous fashion. . . ." ¹

The French replied by imposing further contributions, and then withdrew to the left bank of the Rhine. Eugene advanced, and entrenched himself before Heidelberg, causing the countryside to be purged of vagabond marauders by Hungarian hussars.

¹ Cf. the "atrocities" stunt during the Great War, 1914-18, when identical, equally indiscriminate, allegations were made against German troops. History invariably repeats itself. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

Events moved more rapidly on the Italian theatre of war. Here the die was cast on June 29th, 1734, the day on which the Imperial Generals Mercy and Königsegg were routed at Parma. Mercy fell, and Königsegg saved the Army with difficulty by retreating to the Tyrol. On September 15th Königsegg made a successful surprise attack on the Duc de Broglie's Army, but only four days later Broglie took his *revanche* and defeated Königsegg at Guastalla. Königsegg fled a second time to the Tyrol. The Spaniards took Naples and Sicily, whilst Sardinians and French advanced downstream along the Po towards the Adige.

Consternation prevailed in Vienna. Charles VI, who waged war, not on account of the Rhine, but for the sake of the Pragmatic Sanction, waited in vain for England's intervention. She remained neutral, having found a new ally in the Guelf House of Hanover. She was, moreover, busy developing her oversea possessions, and still satiated as a result of the War of the Spanish Succession. The British Government did not consider France to have yet regained sufficient strength to justify Great Britain's participation in a new coalition war. In other words, England was content to bide her time, and, following the example set by her, Holland likewise abstained.

Austria, thus being left alone with those parts of the Empire which supported her, found herself in a quandary as to whether her political aims would best be served by energetic or dilatory methods of warfare. France, on the other hand, having Lorraine securely in her hands, had no intention of unduly embarrassing herself merely on account of the Polish Crown.

The weary war assumed a new martial aspect on Russia's entering the lists as Austria's ally. In the summer of 1735 a Russian Army of 15,000 men, commanded by General Lacy, marched through Silesia, Bohemia, and the Upper Palatinate to the Rhine. Trained on the Prussian model, it brought up the fighting strength of the forces under Prince Eugene to 80,000 men. Eugene advanced from Bruchsal to Heidelberg to meet Lacy, and took up a position between Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Bruchsal with the object of watching the movements of the French, assembled under Marshal Coigny between Worms and Speyer. Between the enemy Armies flowed the Rhine—not less important for having been as yet but slightly

tinged with human blood during the present campaign. Coigny had orders to avoid a battle, for Cardinal Fleury was about to execute his diplomatic masterpiece by exchanging, before the eyes of an astonished world, the Polish Crown for the Duchy of Lorraine.

When Prince Eugene returned to Vienna in the early autumn, strategy and politics soon came to an agreement. France recognized the Pragmatic Sanction, acknowledged the Elector of Saxony as King of Poland, and took Lorraine in exchange, which she assigned to the dethroned Stanislas Leszczynski as residence during his lifetime. Duke Francis Stephen received as compensation the right to inherit Tuscany. Naples and Sicily reverted to a collateral branch of the Spanish Bourbons, whilst the House of Savoy penetrated a few miles farther into Lombardian territory. What happened south of the Alps concerned the House of Habsburg only; but what took place on the Rhine vitally interested the whole of Germany. Apparently the loss she suffered was but slight. The Reichstag even thanked the Emperor for "his paternal care and foresight." In reality, however, immense harm had been done to the cause of German unity. France succeeded in increasing the territory of Alsace and the Southern Palatinate, which she acquired in 1715, by the addition of Lorraine; and the whole now constituted a compact mass of land resting on natural frontiers formed by the Argonne Hills and the Côte d'Or, and advancing, wedge-like, downstream through the Moselle valley in the direction of Treves. Henceforth all roads on the plateau of Lorraine, and in the valleys of the Saar and Moselle, were, along their entire length, open to French Armies. Conformably with the new strategic position thus created, Mayence, that great central position at the confluence of Main and Rhine, from whence the Romans had formerly menaced Germany, constituted the future aim of France's political offensive.

Between Philippsburg and Mayence the German line of defence lay on the right bank of the Rhine. That part of the Palatinate situated on the left bank became a French base of operations. Baden, being entirely unprotected, was exposed to the guns of Alsatian fortresses, and the defence of the Black Forest Passes had in future to be organized by the Germans on the eastern side of the forest. This program

had, indeed, been mapped out before ever the Polish question arose ; it was now accomplished, and France was henceforth assured, from the Birs to the Nahe, of the political and military command of the Rhine.

Germany's only chance of liberating herself in a war with France from this overwhelming pressure lay in her forestalling the enemy by a rapid advance, seizing the line Treves-Speyer, marching without delay upstream along both the Rhine and the Moselle, and crossing the Saar, before the French had time to concentrate their Armies between Metz and Strasbourg. But there could be no question of such a possibility at that epoch.

In 1735 the Holy Roman Empire was deprived of the last semblance of being a Power capable of waging war on a federal basis, and France had won another war at Austria's expense. The war excited no enthusiasm, and did not arouse German national feeling. The Germans instinctively felt that it formed no part of the historic struggle for the Rhine, and they had long since given up Lorraine as lost.

German national feeling, discouraged and stifled and led astray by the evolution of centuries, slumbered, and would ere now have completely ceased to exist had it not been for the struggle for the Rhine. In that stream lay embedded any hope there might be of a future renascence of the German Empire.

The collective national spirit of Germany manifested itself once again in the eighteenth century in the person of Frederic William of Prussia, when, notwithstanding the political vexations inflicted on him by the Emperor Charles VI, he remained faithful to his liege-lord in the War of the Polish Succession, although having his own aims and ambitions on the Rhine, which undeniably conflicted with those of Charles VI.

When asserting his claim to inherit the territory of Jülich Berg, Frederic William encountered bitter opposition on the part of Austria. The Prussian potentate's dull mind was no match for Vienna's skilful diplomacy. However clear his claim might appear to him, and however praiseworthy the patience with which he laid it aside so long as the negotiations with Poland lasted, it was rejected. Not only the Hereditary Prince of the Palatinate and Sülzbach, son-in-law of Elector Charles Philip of the Palatinate and Neuburg,

but also the Emperor himself, counterclaimed the legacy. At the close of the Polish War, Austria, France, Great Britain, and Holland jointly demanded Prussia's renunciation—all being equally desirous of keeping Prussia away from the Lower Rhine.

Frederic William thus suddenly found himself confronted, to his astonishment, by a united Europe. When Charles VI put in his claim, based on the fact that his mother belonged to the House of Neuburg, and even concluded a secret pact with Cardinal Fleury in order to keep Prussia out, what had hitherto been a mere *querelle allemande* assumed the dimensions of an international problem. On the search for a loophole of escape, Frederic William discovered that Fleury was not disinclined to treat with him. Whereas the Prussian monarch vainly reminded the Emperor of former agreements and of the assistance rendered by Prussia to Austria in the latter's wars—an assistance carried far beyond the limit assigned by Prussia's obligations—he now found France ready to concede Berg and Ravenstein to Prussia. In reality, French diplomacy intended by this masterly move to dupe both Vienna and Potsdam.

Charles VI owed the ratification of the Pragmatic Sanction by the German Estates to Frederic William. When the Prussian King died in 1740, Cardinal Fleury's two secret pacts had not yet seen the light of day, and the legacy was not yet apportioned. The Soldier-King bequeathed his son, who ascended the Prussian throne as Frederic II, the task of settling matters with Austria and the Emperor.

Frederic's more emancipated mind rose above his father's pedantry. Frederic was able to take a comprehensive view of European politics, to rise to heights from which a general survey of the whole system of European States could be obtained. He contemplated this heterogeneous conglomeration, the formation and development of which was determined by a ruthless struggle of all against all, and in which each State endeavoured unceasingly, by dint of violence or cunning, to assert itself. Prompted by fiery ambition, Frederic sought to discover a place for Prussia therein. He could not find it on the Rhine. Here France was too securely established, and tolerated no rival since she had entered into possession of Alsace—the German Thermopylæ—and Lorraine. No

German ruler was in a position to dispute France's claim so long as he could not draw on Germany's collective resources.

In his *Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe*, Frederic II himself described the lost provinces in question as the German Thermopylæ. He penned this document in 1738, after the Great Powers had issued their solemn warning to his father. The pamphlet, which contained a program and revealed its author's duplicity at one and the same time, pointed out that France had likewise guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, and that she was therefore legally entitled to interfere in Germany's affairs after the Emperor Charles VI's death. Frederic thereby laid his finger on a new wound that had just been inflicted next to the cicatrice of the old one caused a century previously by the Westphalian Treaty, which enabled France to claim the left bank of the Rhine and to intervene in Germany's internal politics under the pretext of safeguarding German liberty.

Frederic drew the consequences from the situation thus created. Recognizing that on the Rhine Prussia would be faced by the unanimous opposition of all Powers, he set other aims to his ambition and fell upon Austria, who had deserted the Great Elector, repaid Frederic William's services with ingratitude, and had not been clever enough to purchase by timely concessions the fickle friendship of those dupes' grandson and son.

Fortune favoured Frederic. Charles VI's unexpected death in manhood's prime, in 1740, furnished the youthful monarch, only a few months after ascending Prussia's throne, with the coveted opportunity. With truly demoniac energy he flung himself on Silesia, and emerged from this wantonly kindled war with the title of The Great and the halo of German national hero. But although his fame filled the world, the successive wars waged by him—in the course of which Prussia, first among all German States, arose to consciousness of her political mission, whilst Frederic himself became the living incorporation of that mission—were not the axis around which political events revolved. These wars of his were interwoven with the War of the Austrian Succession and the Franco-British colonial struggle, both of which set all Europe in motion and threw previous and existing coalitions alike into such inextricable confusion as to produce radical changes

of fronts that had become historic. For the first time Europe's reorganization shaped the fate of outlying and distant parts of the world.

Charles VI vainly hoped to preclude any possibility of the Pragmatic Sanction—the object of which was to safeguard his daughter's right of succession to the entire "household" possessions of the Habsburgs—being called in question, by obtaining the assent of every European Power, and also of the German Estates, to it. Immediately after his death, the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria, as descendants of Austrian Archduchesses, put forward their claims; and this induced Spain and France to withdraw their consent.

The year 1741 saw Austria on the verge of disruption. Max Emmanuel of Bavaria's son, inspired by the traditional enmity between Wittelsbach and Habsburg, at once proceeded to assert his claim to Charles VI's heritage by force of arms. Frederic II of Prussia threw himself on Silesia; Frederic Augustus of Saxony's troops threatened Bohemia; and France, bent on Austria's destruction, concluded alliances with all three rulers. Had a Habsburg Prince of the type of Frederic III or Charles VI occupied the Imperial throne, this combined assault would probably have entailed the end of the Habsburg domination. But a courageous and high-spirited young woman now wore the Imperial Crown, and her Magyar subjects swore fidelity to Maria Theresa; the Imperial Army, Prince Eugene's great creation, proved indestructible; whereas the Coalition, on the other hand, suffered from internal dissensions. All these factors enabled Austria to emerge from the struggle intact, albeit weakened.

Prussia opened hostilities before the Coalition had become definitely formed, and took the first step in the campaign at her own risk. Maria Theresa declined to comply with Frederic's demand to cede him the district of Schwiebus, which the Great Elector had obtained, but which Frederic William secretly resold to Austria. Her refusal constituted a pretext for the conquest of Silesia, which Prussian troops overran. Frederic's victory over the Austrians at Mollwitz on April 10th, 1741, was the signal for an alliance between France, Spain, and the two Electors against Austria. In the following month France, Spain, and Bavaria signed an offensive alliance at Nymphenburg, under the terms of which Elector Charles

Albert of Bavaria obtained a promise of the Imperial Crown. A pact drawn up at Breslau on June 5th between Frederic of Prussia and France assured the former of the possession of Lower Silesia. In return for this, Frederic undertook, in his capacity as Margrave of Brandenburg, to vote for the Wittelsbach.

Sweden, Naples, the Cologne Electorate, the Palatinate, and Saxony joined the anti-Austrian Coalition, whereas England, Holland, and Russia took up arms for Maria Theresa. Europe—this time increased to the extent of Russia—was thus again split up into two hostile camps. The line of demarcation ran through the middle of Germany, who still bore the name of Holy Roman Empire, and who now witnessed the spectacle of a fair young Princess fighting both for her hereditary “household” patrimony and for the Imperial Crown. Maria Theresa, resolved neither to part with Silesia nor to renounce the claim of her husband, Francis of Lorraine, to the title and dignity of Emperor, unflinchingly accepted the Coalition’s challenge.

Frederic of Prussia already rested on his laurels when France, Bavaria, and Saxony entered the lists.

The War of the Austrian Succession led to a tactical and strategical deployment of Armies on a vast scale, both in and around Italy and in Germany, and its waves swirled as far as Spain and Finland. The deployment in question was characterized by features so pronounced and so far-reaching in their importance; it was so evidently based on political changes produced in the course of centuries in the Rhine basin; it affected in such a remarkable manner, in the interior of Bohemia, ancient strategic problems, at once historic and stable; that the ghost-like appearance and disappearance of those Armies assumed a premonitory significance we might almost consider symbolical.

France put two attacking Armies into the field in Germany. In Italy, relying on the support of Naples, she remained on the defensive. Although the Italian campaign consisted almost entirely of sieges and bombardments—the British fleet bombarding Naples—a Spanish Army under Montemar nevertheless entered Milan in November 1741. Operations in Germany, on the other hand, were lively. Marshal Belle-Isle advanced on the Upper Rhine, Marshal Maillebois turned

his attention to the Lower Rhine. Neckar Gate and Osning Passes were once more the scene of warlike activity. In August 1741 Belle-Isle crossed the river and the Black Forest Passes without any opposition, compelled Swabia to remain quiet, and joined the Bavarians on the Danube. The Bavarian Elector took Passau by surprise, and then proceeded to march with a Franco-Bavarian Army on Vienna. At the same time Marshal Maillebois crossed the Lower Rhine, and pressed forward along the Ruhr and the Lippe against Westphalia, with the object of keeping Hanover in check, who was slowly preparing for war. A flanking corps covered Maillebois's left flank and kept watch over Holland. King George II of England took part in the *mélée* solely in his capacity as Elector of Hanover. England herself still hesitated.

The French crossed the Rhine without firing a shot. By a single move the war was, so to speak, " jerked " from the banks of that river into the heart of Germany. This tremendous advance, it is true, was only rendered possible owing to the fact that France and Bavaria acted conjointly with Saxony and Prussia, Austria being meanwhile tied down in Italy and Bohemia ; it was none the less characterized by certain fundamental traits peculiar to a strategic offensive based on undisputed mastery over the Rhine. Only an Army firmly rooted on the latter's banks, and utilizing them as its base of operations, could proceed in this fashion. Had the rococo period not been guided by a policy founded on community of dynastic interests, and consequently opposed to the complete dissolution of any large State, such an advance would have foreshadowed a decisive campaign. Strategic conditions were wholly in France's favour. On the left wing, which remained on the defensive, Maillebois controlled the Lippe line, and, thanks to his position on the Weser, could threaten Northern Germany. On the right wing Belle-Isle was effectively protected against a hostile flanking movement, his Army, which held the South German base of operations, being so near the enemy, that the former could, in conjunction with the Bavarians, push forward vigorously on Vienna. But despite all these manifest advantages, things turned out differently.

The Franco-Bavarian Army originally intended marching straight on the Imperial capital, and Elector Charles Albert

urged Headquarters to make a rapid advance. But when only two days' marching distance from Vienna, the French suddenly refused to go any farther. Cardinal Fleury, fearing lest the Elector should become powerful enough to snap the chain which bound him and regain his freedom of action, ordered Belle-Isle to halt. The Duc de Broglie, France's senior Marshal, was despatched to Headquarters with special instructions, which resulted in a decision to swerve round against Bohemia. General Ségur and General Minuzzi were left on the Danube with 20,000 men to cover Bavaria, whilst the Main Army marched off towards Prague. Since Saxon troops under General Rutovsky had meanwhile arrived before the gates of that city, and Maria Theresa, under pressure of necessity, secretly concluded an agreement with Prussia, it became indispensable to hasten matters.

The venture succeeded. Before either the Austrians could get out of the Silesian mountains or the Saxons capture the fortress by their own unaided efforts, French and Bavarians arrived on the scene. They invited the Saxons to join them, and Prague, weakly defended, yielded to their united assault. The Bohemian Estates declared themselves ready to do homage to Charles Albert as King. It seemed as though Maria Theresa's cause were irretrievably lost, and as if after the vicissitudes of centuries Bavaria were destined to recover her supremacy in South-Eastern Germany.

Charles Albert hurried to Frankfurt to ensure his election as Emperor. But his triumph proved short-lived. The effect of turning aside from Vienna now made itself felt to his detriment. Austria had time to adopt new measures and strike a blow at the Allies' open flank. Count Khevenhüller appeared with strong forces on the Danube, drove back Ségur into Linz, sent a corps under General Bärenklau against Passau, where the French were compelled to capitulate after being granted an honourable retreat over the Rhine, and took possession of the Bavarian frontier fortresses. Bavaria's flank was torn open, the French lines of communication were jeopardized, and the Austrians advanced on Munich.

News of impending disaster reached Charles Albert at Frankfurt, where his election to the Imperial throne took place on January 24th, 1742. At the very moment of placing the crown on his head the ground gave way under his feet,

and a ruler without land received a worthless tiara. The Danube was lost to the Allies and the Main menaced, whereas the French, besieged in Prague, were completely enveloped.

At this critical juncture Frederic II of Prussia saved the coalition. Repudiating his secret convention with Maria Theresa now that it appeared advantageous for him to do so, he again took up arms, broke into Moravia, captured Olmütz and Iglau, advanced on Brünn, joined forces with the Saxons and a French corps, and marched on Vienna. Scarcity of provisions and bad roads delayed his progress, but Frederic could doubtless have succeeded in covering the distance if considerations of a political nature had not induced him to retreat when only twenty-four hours' march from the capital.

Frederic distrusted Saxony, whom he did not wish to see grow too strong, and who already stood aloof and laid claim to Moravia. He likewise feared a union between Bohemia and Bavaria, and apprehended France's vengeance. Hence he preferred to leave his Allies in the lurch once more. He remained with his Army on the Moravian-Bohemian frontier, the Saxon troops were withdrawn, and Marshal Broglie assembled the French forces in the neighbourhood of Prague and Eger. The joint campaign came to an end.

Frederic and Cardinal Fleury were both anxious to prevent the war being continued until Austria's total exhaustion. Consequently they slackened the pace of military operations for political reasons. This state of affairs proved profitable to Prussia and disadvantageous to France.

When spring came in 1742, the Austrians attacked. Charles of Lorraine advanced against Frederic, drove the Prussians from Olmütz, and crossed the Moravian-Bohemian frontier. Frederic manœuvred in the vicinity of Czaslau until challenged at Chotusitz, where he gave battle, repulsing his adversaries, who retreated over the border. Frederic did not follow in pursuit, judging the moment propitious for opening peace negotiations. These culminated in the Treaty of Breslau, which gave Silesia to Prussia's King as the price of his success.

Broglie's fate now overtook him. The Austrians began to encircle the French Army in Bohemia. Broglie appealed

to Versailles for help, and endeavoured to maintain his position until the arrival of reinforcements. He repulsed a flanking-corps advancing under Prince Lobkovitz on Prague *via* Budweis, but Charles of Lorraine soon compelled him to retreat under the walls of Prague. His urgent appeal for relief set the Court of Versailles in motion. Maillebois received instructions to hasten to Broglie's assistance, whilst the Duc d'Harcourt was sent to the Upper Rhine to collect a new Army and rescue the Bavarians. Since England still remained impassive, Maillebois decided to risk weakening his powerful defensive position on the Weser in order to concentrate large forces on the Main. D'Harcourt crossed the Upper Rhine, traversed the Black Forest Passes, and marched on Munich.

France concentrated her entire strength on the eastern border of the Rhine basin, her object being to make the Rhine her base of operations in a war waged simultaneously on the Danube and the upper course of the Elbe.

Broglie was already locked up in Prague when Maillebois's troops approached. Having joined forces, Charles of Lorraine and Khevenhüller advanced to meet Maillebois, who turned aside into Bavaria. Thus out-maneuvred, the French Marshal sought to effect a junction with his Bavarian Allies without risking a battle. Whilst Khevenhüller followed in Maillebois's tracks, Charles of Lorraine turned back towards Prague. He was not strong enough, however, to beleaguer this fortress, and contented himself with a blockade. Broglie held out until all hope of relief had vanished; then, leaving Belle-Isle behind, he cut his way with the bulk of his troops through the enemy lines in November 1742. Belle-Isle, with 20,000 men, continued to defend Prague till winter came, and famine and disease reduced the garrison by one-half. Then, one dark December night, he also hewed a passage through the Austrian lines with 9,000 valiant survivors. This remnant succeeded in reaching Bavaria by way of Eger. France's Bohemian campaign had failed, Austria re-entered into possession of that land, and Bavaria became the theatre of war.

France lost the campaign, which her generals had planned on a truly imposing scale, because she finally lacked the requisite strength for bringing about a decision, and because Austria proved stronger in the field than anyone anticipated.

As a matter of fact, however, Frederic of Prussia saved Maria Theresa, albeit not for altruistic motives. He did not desire Austria's elimination as a political Power, and skilfully adjusted his military action to his political aims. Whilst not shrinking from obtaining a decision on the battlefield, Frederic was content to fight his own battles alone.

When Cardinal Fleury died on January 29th, 1743, France had everywhere been forced into the defensive. England prepared to intervene actively on Austria's behalf, in order to thrust back France and the other Mediterranean Powers, and, leaning for support on her union with Hanover, to assert her own supremacy on the Continent. Thus the wars between Spain and England, France and Spain, and England and France, now resolved themselves into a war between England, on the one hand, and all the Bourbon States, on the other. Barely disguised in a Hanoverian mask, England, allied to Austria, fought France and the latter's partners. This alliance not only threatened France's predominance in Europe, but her whole world position. The result was a new political constellation, in which the larger German States—Bavaria with the Wittelsbach-ruled Electorates of Cologne and the Palatinate, Saxony (whose Elector wore the Polish Crown), and, last but certainly not least, Prussia—had necessarily to take up their respective positions.

The War of the Austrian Succession assumed the aspect of a world war. But, however divergent the interests at stake, however heterogeneous the hopes and fears aroused within the various parties to the gigantic conflict might be, the fundamental determining fact underlying this struggle, which shook Europe to its foundations, remained the immemorial and still undecided strife for possession of the Rhine. If in 1743 France had not been securely rooted in territory conquered or otherwise annexed by her on the Upper Rhine, and in regions over which she had assumed a protectorate on the Middle Rhine, she would have been unable to invade Germany and maintain her predominance in Europe. As Frederic II, when still Crown Prince of Prussia, wrote in his above-mentioned pamphlet on European political conditions in 1738, the only frontiers assigned to France in the East were those laid down by her "moderation" and "justice." We need not dwell on the intentional irony of these words.

In 1743 France's "moderation" transferred her frontiers from the Rhine as far as Moldavia ; and in the same year France's "sense of justice" required that German-speaking peoples should conform solely to French dictation. This was more than Europe could endure and England, in her own interest, tolerate.

When, after a pause of twenty-seven years, England decided to revert to an active Continental policy and George II—at first, as we saw, merely in his capacity as Elector of Hanover¹—concluded an alliance with Austria, following thereby the example set by William III, who with the help of German mercenaries had endeavoured to bar the way to French ambition, the mastery over the Rhine permitted France's leaders to map out their plan of campaign as they liked. Success or failure depended uniquely on their own skill, on the capacity of their troops, and on the general strength of their country. All strategic conditions were incontestably in France's favour.

No better base of operations could be imagined than that occupied by France on the Rhine, Main, and Weser. The Duc de Broglie and the Bavarian General Seckendorff awaited reinforcements before recommencing the offensive. Minuzzi covered Munich, which had been retaken. Preparations were made with a view to strengthening the attacking Armies. In the large fortified camp between the Lauter and the Queich, in Alsatian and Palatine territory, the Marquis de Noailles assembled new forces in order to advance beyond the Rhine.

Austria and England were determined that the war should be fought out in Bavaria. The strategic position recalled that in 1706. Whilst Austrian and Sardinian troops under Marshal Traun were victorious in Italy, where they drove the Spaniards from Modena into Papal territory, the main Armies concentrated in South Germany. A British-Hanoverian Army, under George II, marched in Marlborough's track upstream along the Rhine and reached the Main in the spring ; an Austrian Army, commanded by Duke Charles of Lorraine, advanced up the Danube after crossing the Inn, defeated the Bavarians on May 9th, 1743, at Simbach, and captured Munich.

Should the English King and the Lorrainer succeed in making a combined attack on Broglie and Seckendorff, a

¹ Hostilities between the British Government and France did not break out until 1744. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

disaster for French and Bavarians, comparable to that of Höchstädt, became inevitable. Everything depended on Noailles being able to prevent a junction of the enemy Armies. The French Marshal crossed the Rhine, and on June 28th encountered King George's forces at Dettingen. After a battle, the issue of which remained long uncertain, the French were compelled to retreat. King George took Hanau, but was unable to continue his advance on Broglie's flank. The victory proved nevertheless sufficient, since Noailles withdrew to the Queich and abandoned the game, whereupon Broglie, forsaking Bavaria and Swabia, did not rest until the Black Forest Passes were between him and the foe. When Broglie decided to follow Noailles's example, and withdrew to the Rhine bridgeheads, the entire French strategic plan collapsed. Noailles's pusillanimity proved infectious. Seckendorff signed a convention with Khevenhüller at Niederschönfeld, which obliged the former to evacuate Bavaria, thus placing that country at Austria's mercy. As in Max Emmanuel's days, an Austrian Crown Bailiff appeared in Munich and laid claim to the whole Electorate. Vainly did Charles Albert, the Emperor without land, protest. The scene of operations was transferred to the Rhine.

George II's Army crossed that river at Mayence and marched on Worms, whilst the Austrians traversed the Black Forest and turned-up before Hüningen. The appearance of the Anglo-Hanoverian Army in front of Worms had the effect of throwing the French back on their base of operations and forcing them to adopt a defensive attitude on the left bank. Noailles abandoned Worms; he felt that even his positions on the Queich were in such imminent danger as to justify his retreating by way of Landau and Haguenau on to the line Strasbourg-Wissembourg, in order to avoid an enveloping movement by the Austrians. Consternation prevailed in France. Neither the loss of Bavaria, nor the diminution of military prestige, nor the corresponding strengthening—which such a diminution necessarily involved—of the enemy coalition, could stimulate either the French Court or the French nation in anything like the same degree as the fact that hostilities were now being waged in Alsace, *le boulevard de la France*. Had George II made an energetic onslaught on Wissembourg, and, together with Charles of Lorraine,

resolutely attacked the French simultaneously on two fronts, the winter campaign of 1743 in Alsace might very likely have proved disastrous for France. But George contented himself with destroying the fortifications erected by the French in the Southern Palatinate, and withdrew forthwith to the Lower Rhine, in order to spend the winter in the Netherlands and Westphalia. France thus gained sufficient time to recover from the effects of the unfavourable turn taken by the fortunes of war and to prepare for war with Great Britain.

On February 22nd, 1744, a British fleet attacked a Spanish squadron in the Toulon roadstead, directing at the same time its fire against French battleships convoying the Spanish vessels into French waters. Hereupon France formally declared war on Great Britain,¹ and the conflagration became general.

One hundred years after France had openly entered the Thirty Years War and thereby risen to the rank of leading Power in Europe, fifty years after the first attempt to establish a balance of power to Great Britain's advantage, the decisive struggle for world predominance between France and England developed from out of the War of the Austrian Succession; and this desperate struggle proceeded alike on the European continent, on the high seas, and in the colonies. Once more the question arises as to whether the fight for the Rhine was entirely eliminated from that far greater tussle, which involved world problems, and which completely threw into the shade such secondary issues as the Austrian Succession or Frederic II's campaign. And once more must the reply be emphatically in the negative. By the greatness of its scope and the diversity of its aspect, the fight for the Rhine remained the determining factor of Europe's political evolution; also, consequently, of the struggle for world power between the nations of the Western hemisphere, including Great Britain.

France still fought, as she had invariably done, for the Rhine. Of what account in her eyes were the Mississippi, Canada, India, the Mediterranean, compared with the possession of a river, the banks of which, in bygone glorious days of Hohenstaufen rule, were the cradle of German Imperial might, which had subsequently witnessed the steady growth

¹ See p. 210.

of German municipal life, and whose silently flowing waters concealed in their mysterious depths the unravelled secret of Germany's persistence as an independent European Power? France cared not about her coasts; she heard not the distant clash of arms in North America and India, for scarcely 150,000 French colonists had hitherto embarked on an adventurous journey across the seas; she was content to ignore Flanders, whence, nevertheless, her Armies emerged victorious from the Scheldt, Sambre, and Meuse. She riveted her attention on the Rhine, and on that centre of gravity of her European hegemony—Alsace.

In the spring of 1744 Duke Charles of Lorraine set out from Heilbronn; by the time summer came he was in a position to appear at the head of a strong Army in the plain of the Rhine, whence he could menace the French strategic base between Saverne and the Queich. In view of a danger growing ever nearer and more threatening, the French Court, otherwise steeped in lethargy, summoned up all its strength and decided to utilize its last available resources. Louis XV himself took command of the Army in Flanders and led it by forced marches to the Moselle, whither ill tidings bade him haste.

The left flank of the Rhine Army had been turned by Charles of Lorraine's troops, and the French were beating a hasty retreat on Saverne and Lorraine. Wild and almost legendary bands of Croats and Pandors roamed about Alsace, striking terror into the hearts of her inhabitants, whilst Imperial troops advanced over the Saar, hoisting their victorious flag in Hagenau. Stanislas Leszczynski, titular King of Poland, fled from Nancy to Versailles. On his arrival on the Lorraine plateau Duke Charles was greeted by familiar fire signals burning on the hills around Nancy.

Paris was panic-stricken. Alsace, France's rampart, seemed irretrievably lost, and Lorraine, to all appearances, in imminent danger. Not only was Metz threatened, but the theatre of operations drew uncomfortably near the Argonne heights—nearer than ever it had been since Condé's days. True, a French Army numbering 90,000 men could be seen concentrating around Metz to give battle to Duke Charles of Lorraine's 65,000. But an epidemic gravely impaired the former's efficiency. As is often the case in history, a sudden

stroke of fortune saved the French. Charles of Lorraine withdrew, hurriedly obeying Maria Theresa's cry for help, for the Empress saw herself threatened anew in her ancestral lands.

Frederic again invaded Bohemia. He alleged as his reason that he wished to prevent Prussia being buried under the avalanche of too swiftly advancing events. Prussia's dreams of supremacy, which Frederic embodied, could not but be adversely effected by a number of factors with which he had not reckoned—France's momentary straits, Hanover's rise, Saxony's alliance with the Habsburgs, Austria's unexpected recovery. Invariably inspired by egotistical reasons, having saved Maria Theresa in 1742, after betraying her, Frederic now proceeded to rescue Louis XV in order to avoid being endangered himself. He therefore marched, in August 1744, into Bohemia, and pounced with lightning-like rapidity on Prague, which fell into his hands within a few days.

Duke Charles of Lorraine rushed post-haste to Bohemia. Other troops from Lombardy hastened to the aid of the gallant young Empress in her sore distress. With a single jerk the chessmen on the board were sent flying from the Rhine to the Elbe. After an unsuccessful attempt to capture Tabor, Frederic was compelled to retreat across the Silesian frontier and assume the defensive. Behind Duke Charles came French and Bavarians. The former took Freiburg-im-Breisgau; the latter, after driving the Austrians from their Western Marches, brought Charles VII in short-lived triumph back to Munich. This proved too much for the exile, who found peace in timely death in January 1745.

After Frederic's retreat, the Austrians prepared for a new onslaught on their Bavarian adversaries; but at this juncture Max Joseph, Charles Albert's son, concluded peace with Maria Theresa. In return for undertaking to vote for the latter's husband, Francis Stephen, at the forthcoming election to fill the vacancy on the Imperial throne, Max Joseph was given back his crown and country. Frederic, allied with France, now found himself alone, facing Austria, England, Hanover, Holland, and Saxony.

In the course of the campaigns which followed, England's struggle with the Bourbon Powers, the War of the Austrian Succession, and Frederic's Silesian war were all reduced to

a single amorphous mass seemingly devoid of any political *raison d'être*, or, indeed, of any intelligible shape whatever. For three years all the nations involved fought on distant fields of battle, with varying degrees of intensity and varying success. The pendulum of victory swung now to one side, now to another. But whatever the vicissitudes of fortune, Frederic's star shone out in the hazy sky with undiminished brilliancy. Not only as a consumate master of the art of war, but even more as an intellectual genius, did he dominate the evolution of events.

The battles fought by him gave their lasting impress to the campaign of 1745. When the fourth day of June of that memorable year dawned, Frederic had already vanquished Charles of Lorraine at Hohenfriedberg in Upper Silesia. Scarcely four months later, on September 30th, his rapid and clever tactics ensured him another victory at Soor. And when that weather-beaten old warrior familiarly known as the *Alter Dessauer* whacked the Saxons on December 5th at Kesselsdorf, Maria Theresa found herself compelled to make peace a second time with Prussia. Under the terms of the Treaty of Dresden Frederic retained his hold on Silesia, and Prussia emerged from this war of attrition as a European Great Power. It assuredly cost Frederic little to assure Maria Theresa, in return, of his support of Francis Stephen's candidature to the Imperial throne.

Meanwhile France waged war, not without success, in Flanders. On May 11th Marshal Maurice of Saxony, one of the numerous illegitimate sons of Augustus the Strong, defeated an Anglo-Hanoverian Army under the Duke of Cumberland at Fontenoy. The campaign on the Rhine came to a standstill, but the French were again in possession of that river. They were clever enough, having eliminated the Bavarians, not to advance against the Austrians, and thus uselessly scatter their forces; instead of so doing, they sought a decision in the Low Countries. Either side was careful to avoid the risk of an open battle after the bloody encounter at Fontenoy, but the French none the less secured possession of the line of fortresses on the Scheldt. The fickle fortunes of war having likewise proved favourable alike to France and Spain in Italy, France again found herself at the outset of 1746 in the ascendancy. Louis XV succeeded in safely

transporting Charles Edward, the romantic and last surviving Stuart Pretender, to Scotland, thereby diverting George II's attention from Flanders; and this enabled the French monarch to reap further triumphs in the Low Countries. His Armies broke through the Sambre line, stormed Brussels, captured Namur, defeated Charles of Lorraine—who had hastened hither from Bohemia to check Marshal Saxe's progress—at Rocoux, and drove the Allies across the Meuse.

Fate is a capricious goddess. Had the Franco-Spanish Armies in Italy not suddenly been deserted by their luck at this time and driven over the Maritime Alps and the Var into the sunny plains of Provence, and had Charles Edward Stuart not been defeated at Culloden on April 20th, there can be no possible doubt that the Bourbon Powers would have emerged victorious from the struggle.

The years 1747 and 1748 reserved fresh triumphs for the French. On July 2nd, 1747, Marshal Saxe defeated the united Anglo-Dutch Army at Laafeld and captured Bergen-op-Zoom; and some twelve months later he took Maastricht.

Maria Theresa did not despair. She had meanwhile obtained assistance from Elizabeth of Russia, and this permitted her to reorganize her policy. In return for English and Dutch subsidies the Tsaritza despatched 37,000 men under Prince Repnin to the West. For the second time in history a Russian Army advanced through Germany towards the Rhine. Repnin led his troops by way of Upper Silesia, Moravia, and Bohemia to Franconia, and was just about to swerve to the north against Maastricht when the news of the conclusion of peace induced him to retrace his steps. The Powers suddenly became tired of hostilities. England had succeeded in suppressing the Jacobite rising in Scotland; King Philip V of Spain was dead, and his successor shrank from further sacrifices of blood and treasure in Italy; the Dutch fought half-heartedly; and France wished for a compromise with Great Britain and Austria so as not to miss the favourable opportunity which presented itself.

Although no representative of Prussia took his seat at the conference at Aix-la-Chapelle, which finally, on October 18th, 1748, put an end to the War of the Austrian Succession, the treaty in question none the less guaranteed Prussia the possession of Silesia. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was by no means

a work of constructive statesmanship. It added, on the contrary, new errors to old ones, and only patched-up European peace by appealing to the Treaty of Utrecht, just as the latter had previously appealed to the Treaty of Westphalia.

France's predominance on the Rhine remained unimpaired. Even if she did not retain her possessions in South Germany, even if her strategy lacked any really genial inspiration, she had none the less—thanks to Marshal Saxe's superior tactics—proved strong enough in Flanders and on the Rhine to be able easily to crave oblivion for the loss of Prague, the reverse at Dettingen, and the temporary invasion of Alsace by Pandors. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle formed the logical completion of that of Utrecht, and served to remind Germany once more of the fact that the Peace of Westphalia had achieved, a century before, the internal dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, whilst leaving its external structure apparently intact. Prussia's rise to greatness now irrevocably rent asunder the historic envelope. The signatories of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle nevertheless judged it politic to adhere to the fiction of the Empire's existence. As for Prussia, her more immediate interests diverted her attention from the West and compelled her to leave the mastery over the Rhine to the French. Even as Austria formerly turned aside from the Rhine because she found it easier to expand in the Danube's plain and in Italy, so also Prussia now abandoned that river because the scattered position of her dismembered territories did not allow her to run the risk of courting attack precisely at her weakest and most exposed spot.

The farther the new centre of gravity of German power gradually being formed receded from the Rhine, the more secure did the position of predominance assured to France by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle become. Prussia's rise to power was founded on reclaimed "colonial" territory within her own geographical limits, on Prussian settlements on the Oder developed by Prussian energy and enterprise. Here she lived her own life until the day when the irresistible development of events drew her *nolens volens* into the orbit of the Rhine—*i.e.* of the river, bereft of which no united German nation and consequently no German economic unit can exist.

During the eighteenth century the Rhine enjoyed the

protection of neither of the two largest German Powers. No one avenged and made good the loss of Alsace and Strasbourg, the Southern Palatinate, and Lorraine. None the less German life continued to pulsate indestructibly in Alsace ; whilst the innate vigour of the inhabitants of the Palatinate and the Rhine Province, of Swabia and Bavaria, enabled these regions to reawaken perpetually to new activity despite unceasing tribulations. If numerous castles which incendiaries' torches did not spare were not restored ; if ploughed fields henceforth marked the site of many former villages ; the towns which had been set on fire by order of French generals rose again from out of their ashes.

Louis XV's instructions to his delegates at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle were to the effect that he desired to conclude peace *en roi et non pas en marchand*. For this reason, France made no difficulty about surrendering her conquests in the Netherlands and Lombardy ; she recognized Maria Theresa's husband as Emperor Francis I, and exchanged Madras for Fort Louis, in Canada, which she had lost. Louis XV's magnanimous gesture skilfully concealed the precarious nature of French finances, and by no means implied a policy of renunciation or abstemiousness. For if France was certainly tired—more so, indeed, than in 1715—she now found herself undeniably in a stronger position as regards England than she had been thirty-three years previously.

England succeeded in transforming the War of the Spanish Succession into the first World War, in order to subserve her own aims and interests. The outcome had been to propound to her sole advantage, and with the object of setting-up a barrier to French expansion, the doctrine of the balance of power as a cardinal principle of European policy. Hereby England faithfully carried out William of Orange's unwritten testament ; and having accomplished this she flattered herself with rendering impossible French hegemony for good. But it proved a miscalculation—a miscalculation which recurred more than once in the future.

After the Peace of Utrecht, England, conscious of her strength, devoted her efforts to the task of developing her trade. Reassured as to the existing situation, she could afford to divert her attention from the European Continent and concentrate it on opening-up new markets in distant lands.

France, on the other hand, gathered fresh strength and set out to exercise anew her perennial will to power.

Louis XV, who called the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle *une paix royale*, was but the shadow of his great-grandfather ; but despite his licentious habits he was a monarch for whom, instinctively so to speak, his country's power and its predominance were synonymous notions. In Europe Louis XV found himself even more powerful in 1748 than Louis XIV had been in 1715 ; and, viewed externally, France's colonial Empire occupied a considerably larger area than England's. The territory which the genius of a Dupleix had subjugated in India amounted to nearly twice the size of France. In North America, France's colonies extended from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson Bay ; and they almost completely enclosed, in the East, the narrow zone of British possessions along the Atlantic. Nor had France abandoned her claim to maritime supremacy. But however much French statesmen might accustom themselves to think in terms of world expansion and world policy, an elementary instinct invariably attracted them to that part of the European continent which lay between the Mediterranean and the English Channel, on the one hand, the Atlantic and an undefined eastern frontier, on the other. Within the geographical space in question, France directly possessed, in 1748, the entire territory stretching from the Pyrenees to the Upper Rhine, and from the Sambre to the mouth of the Rhône ; and her indirect control reached from Cadiz to Maastricht, and from Cologne to Naples. She had again risen to predominance in Europe ; and it was not the collective energy of a united nation which she lacked in order to assert with unprecedented vehemence her will to power, but rather the intelligent initiative of a political *élite*. The French nation still aspired to cross the Rhine, to make the latter the secure fundament of French supremacy in Europe, to extend French rule over Central Europe and beyond by means of a *clientèle* obedient to the point of subservience. Jeanne Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, the royal mistress, who combined in a rare degree beauty and talent, and who, thanks to that singular combination, now exerted a decisive influence on French policy, incarnated the belief in France's predestined *rôle* as hegemonic Power.

One of the main secrets of French political prestige

was undoubtedly the system of *clientèle*. Far from having diminished during the first half of the eighteenth century, that system had been in no small measure reinforced. Germany west of the Elbe, Italy, and Spain, were all reduced to a condition of vassalage, and even Prussia had been unable to escape entirely being drawn within the orbit of France's sphere of influence. Consequently the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in nowise impaired France's Continental position, even if her financial straits rendered impossible a continuation of the war. From a military point of view her superiority over England was more marked than it had been in Louis XIV's days.

Not the least of the reasons why, in 1748, France proved a greater menace to England than at the close of the seventeenth century must be sought in the fact that Hanover, the ancestral seat of the reigning dynasty on the Thames, lay strategically within the French sphere of influence. England having resumed her place as a European Power, Hanover proved henceforth her heel of Achilles. As far as England herself was concerned, this fact became painfully evident when, only eight years after the conclusion of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the so-called Seven Years War broke out as a result of Franco-British colonial rivalry.

With this war—originally due to conflicting expanding tendencies of England and France in their respective oversea possessions—Frederic of Prussia's struggle for the retention of Silesia was inextricably intertwined and the whole system of European alliances thereby thrown anew into the melting-pot. In the maze of these complicated strifes the struggle for the Rhine temporarily lost its significance and was relegated to the background. But we again see the fact clearly demonstrated that the Rhine in French hands is a base of attacking operations of the highest importance, under the shelter of which France can mobilize her Armies without fear of disturbance, and that the river is unrivalled as a starting-point for an offensive, having the heart of Germany as its goal. Her control of the Rhine assured France of the mastery over both North-Western and Southern Germany; she could wage war simultaneously in Westphalia and Thuringia, and mount guard over the North Sea coast from the estuary of the Scheldt to that of the Elbe; and in the event of a

favourable outcome of the war she would have been able to shut-off England completely from the Continent.

Sooner than anyone else, Frederic recognized the true concatenation of events. Threatened by Austria's desire of *revanche* he proposed an alliance to England in 1755, declaring his readiness to defend Hanover in the event of war. He thus linked-up Prussia's security with that of Hanover and North-West Germany. The convention concluded at Westminster in 1756 was not primarily directed against France, its primordial object being to cover both contracting Powers. Frederic hoped, at the same time, to renew his already existing agreements with France, and to insert therein a new clause whereby France should be induced to forgo all aggressive designs against Hanover. In this way warlike operations would have been kept away from North-West Germany, Frederic's flank secured, and Prussia given a free hand in the impending decisive struggle with Austria. But Frederic miscalculated the situation. For evident reasons France could not part with what would be her most valuable trump in the event of a Franco-British war. She appealed to the Treaty of Westphalia, which, since France guaranteed it, gave her, if need be, the right to carry war into any part of the German Empire—including, consequently, Hanover. Hence France declined to renew her alliance with Prussia and joined hands with her own adversary Austria—a change of front facilitated by the diplomacy of Vienna. Events moved so rapidly as to very soon out-distance the European system of alliances and the European balance of power.

On May 17th, 1756, England declared war on France. On August 29th, forestalling all the other Powers, Frederic invaded Saxony with an Army of 65,000 men. This act of the Prussian King set all Europe ablaze. The Franco-British and Austro-Prussian Wars speedily developed into a world conflagration. Maria Theresa and Mme de Pompadour found allies in Russia, Sweden, and Saxony, so that the rôle devolved on Prussia of being England's one and only "Continental sword." France's colonial empire, England's commercial hegemony, and Prussia's political existence were the stakes at issue in the Seven Years War. Nothing was said of the Rhine.

We do not propose entering here into details regarding

the part played by Frederic in the struggle, except in so far as his campaigns against France are concerned. But precisely because we intentionally confine ourselves to this aspect of things, the reader may perhaps see all the more clearly that the hostile parties were also, in the new war, fighting for mastery on the Rhine, although no political document of those times alludes to the question.

Frederic's first campaign came to an end with the capitulation of the Saxons at Pirna. The second resulted in the disaster of Kolin, which threw Frederic back on his starting-point. A French Army now appeared on the main theatre of war to assist Austrians and Russians against the common foe. It arrived crowned with the laurels of victory. Fortune favoured the French as it had rarely done. A French fleet defeated the British off Minorca. On land, after successfully concentrating their troops on the Lower Rhine, Marshal Soubise took Wesel and advanced upstream with 30,000 men, whilst Marshal d'Estrées marched up the Lippe towards Hanover. Luck rather than skilful generalship enabled d'Estrées to beat an Anglo-Hanoverian force of 36,000 men under the Duke of Cumberland.

The latter, entrenched on the right bank of the Weser, in and around the villages of Hostenbeck and Ohnsburg, awaited the enemy; Hanoverian troops formed the right wing, Brunswickians the left wing, and Hessians the centre. On July 25th, 1756, d'Estrées prepared to attack with 72,000 men, but owing to fog postponed his assault till the following day. Turning Cumberland's left flank, four French brigades flung themselves on the Brunswickians. General Hardenberg held Ohnsburg until, surrounded on all sides, he cut a retreat with great difficulty at the point of the bayonet. Cumberland sent Hessian battalions to the rescue, which succeeded in restoring order on the left wing; but recognizing the weakness of the enemy centre, where Cumberland's artillery was almost entirely uncovered, the French at once attacked. The Champagne brigade threw itself on the great Hostenbeck battery, captured eighteen guns, and advanced on the village, the key of the entire defensive position. Cumberland lost his head. Seeing his left wing turned and his centre in danger of being crumbled-up, he all too hastily ordered a general retreat, although his Brunswickian troops had already re-

sumed the offensive, the French attack on Hastenbeck had been repulsed, and the centre's battery retaken. D'Estrées, who had himself been contemplating a retreat, recovered his energy, followed on the enemy's heels, captured Hamelin on August 3rd, and pushed forward towards Hanover. For the first time in history, the French, following in the tracks of the Romans, emerged from the Weser hills and advanced in the direction of the Oker.

Despite his success, d'Estrées failed to satisfy the Court of Versailles, who dismissed him in favour of the Duc de Richelieu, a great-nephew of the Cardinal. This marked the beginning of a great *chassé-croisé* among Mme de Pompadour's favourites. Richelieu drove Cumberland by way of Bremen towards the coast, where the Anglo-Hanoverian Army was locked in. Unable either to prevent his complete envelopment or to cut his way out, the Hanoverian Prince saw himself forced to sign the Convention of Kloster Seeven, under the terms of which he disbanded his Army and promised to take no further part in the war.

It was a grievous humiliation for England, and George II's indignation at his son's disastrous conduct can easily be understood. But the British Government grasped the world importance assumed by the war. Inspired by William Pitt the Elder's spirit, and appreciating the danger involved by Cumberland's capitulation, the British Government held steadfastly to its alliance with Prussia, in order to prevent the French "conquering America in Germany."

Whilst Richelieu's troops occupied Hanover, France's Rhine Army, commanded by Soubise, marched through South Germany, so as to rejoin the Imperial forces under the Duke of Hildburghausen in the neighbourhood of the river Saale.

In the summer of 1757 France controlled the country stretching from the mouth of the Elbe to the source of the Main. Richelieu advanced on Magdeburg, Soubise on Leipzig. Frederic of Prussia found himself menaced simultaneously in the North, East, and South. The Russians crossed the Niemen and marched on East Prussia, the Swedes attacked Pomerania, the Austrians occupied a large part of Silesia. Nevertheless, Frederic did not despair. On Soubise approaching Leipzig, the King left the Duke of Bevern to hold the Austrians in check, whilst he himself hurried with 12,000

men to Dresden, where he picked up reinforcements numbering 10,000 men. At the head of these 22,000 troops he crossed the Saale on September 11th and suddenly confronted the combined Armies of Soubise and Hildburghausen.

Frederic endeavoured to force the French to give battle before he himself should loose his freedom of action along the shortened inner lines. But no encounter took place until Bevern was already hard pressed by Charles of Lorraine, the Austrian General Haddick with a flying corps had broken his way through to Brandenburg and plundered Berlin, and Richelieu moved on Langensalza. Frederic's doom appeared sealed. He himself knew scarcely where to turn.

On receiving news that Haddick had captured Berlin, Frederic hastened northwards, leaving Soubise and Hildburghausen to their own devices. This encouraged the Allies, reinforced by a corps despatched to their aid by Richelieu and commanded by the younger Broglie. They pushed forward towards Leipzig, hoping to reap laurels behind Frederic's back. But when the latter unexpectedly wheeled round, the Allies' confidence, already shaken by an unfortunate skirmish at Gotha, began to fail them. They retired behind the Saale, but seemed resolved to keep their positions on that river. Frederic followed in pursuit, drove the French outposts from Weissenfels, crossed the river, and suddenly appeared simultaneously in the Allies' flank and rear. Soubise hurriedly concentrated his troops between Mücheln and Branderode, fortified the heights commanding these two villages, and in this position, with 70 battalions, 94 squadrons, and 45 heavy guns, offered battle to the Prussians. Frederic pitched his camp to the east of the enemy lines, between Bebra and Rossbach ; here he concentrated his entire forces, consisting of 27 battalions, 45 squadrons, and 45 guns. Like a crouching lion he watched the movements of his adversaries, only a few thousand paces distant. Marches and counter-marches were at an end. This time Frederic determined to strike, and to strike vigorously, if only the enemy gave him a chance to do so.

What is known to history as the battle of Rossbach ensued. Its outcome was a headlong flight of the allied French and Imperial Armies, which left 4,000 dead and wounded on the field. 5,000 prisoners, including 5 generals and 400 officers,

72 guns of all calibres, a number of standards and flags, and the whole of the Allies' heavy baggage, fell into the victors' hands. French and Imperials shared equally in this memorable rout of 60,000 troops by an Army considerably less than half their number. Entire units of the allied Armies, seized by panic, laid down their arms without even firing a shot. Frederic's total losses did not exceed 500 men, and his centre divisions were hardly engaged at all.

The battle of Rossbach had the effect of tearing, by a single bold stroke, the net spun around Frederic by the Allies at its weakest spot. The Prussian monarch's tiger-like spring accomplished its aim. It saved Saxony and brought the Saale under Frederic's control. The victorious march of the French Armies into the heart of Germany ended lamentably in a *déroute totale*—to quote the words of Soubise's despatch, in which, *dans le débordement de son désespoir*, as the Marshal expressed himself, he broke the fatal news to Louis XV and Mme de Pompadour.

The tidings of Rossbach stirred to its depth the soul of the German people, seared by the red-hot iron of century-old oppression and dissension. They felt it to be a German, and not merely a Prussian, triumph, and Frederic appeared in the light of champion of Germany's national cause. Rossbach proved a powerful incentive for the development of German national feeling. For the first time for many centuries the voice of internal discord was momentarily silenced; above the clash of petty bickerings and vain jealousies the name of Rossbach soared like unto a symbol of national resurrection. Frederic's portrait could be seen all over Germany, in the mansions of the nobility and the huts of peasants, whether the inhabitants had hitherto been neutral or even hostile. For all rejoiced equally in the assurance that Rossbach dealt a shattering blow to foreign domination in Germany.

And yet Frederic himself was not aware of having fought at Rossbach for the German cause. He had consciously fought only for himself, the Hohenzollern dynasty, and the Prussian State, which latter he desired to raise to the rank of nation. The battle finished, he wrote the words: *A présent je descendrai en paix dans la tombe, depuis que la réputation et l'honneur de ma nation est sauvé* (sic).

True, he could rest in peace. Prussia's reputation and honour were saved. But Frederic accomplished more than this. Despite his love of the French language and of Romanic culture, he rendered a lasting service to the cause of German nationality. Furthermore, by his struggle with Austria and the decisive influence exerted by his victory on the Franco-British conflict, he laid the foundations for a renewal of the German national spirit and for the building-up of a powerful German Empire, and at the same time immeasurably facilitated Great Britain's subsequent development as a Naval Power.

Although the French did not retreat over the Rhine, Rossbach none the less heralded a new political order. Richelieu withdrew from the Elbe to the Weser; Soubise fled from Thuringia and re-formed his harassed divisions in Franconia; but the halo of French military prestige disappeared. In a letter to her faithful friend, Soubise, Mme de Pompadour remarked bitterly "that it is alike for you and the nation most painful to observe that luck, through your own fault, is beginning to abandon us, and that you are the first to cause us to weep for grief."

At Westminster, Pitt the Elder declared that despite the convention of Kloster Seeven England would not forsake Prussia's King, and in glowing words he spurred-on the nation to continue the war by holding-up England's world supremacy and Europe's freedom—as understood on the banks of the Thames—as its goal. Frederic, for his part, observed to the British Ambassador: "It has taken a long time to produce again an English statesman."

After the destruction of the French Army, Frederic wheeled round from the Saale, and, by means of forced marches, reached the Katzbach within sixteen days. Here he encountered Charles of Lorraine's main force, 65,000 strong, at Leuthen, and routed it. Even the victory of Rossbach cannot compare with that of Leuthen, Frederic's most brilliant military achievement, which liberated Silesia and destroyed Austria's best Army. The headlong flight of French and Imperials at Rossbach nevertheless impressed the popular imagination more visibly than did the splendid feat of arms at Leuthen. The German popular instinct estimated the national consequences of Rossbach higher than the

vast political and military importance of Frederic's greatest triumph. For the German people the precipitous flight of Soubise symbolised the definite end of France's claim to dominate Germany east of the Rhine. And this popular instinct did not err.

Fortune remained henceforth unfavourable to French strategy. Frederic's genius inspired the campaign in 1758, which drove the French from the Weser, the Oker, and the Fulda over the Rhine. Prussia's King sent 10 battalions and 30 squadrons to the newly formed Hanoverian Army, and gave it Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick as Commander. At the same time he despatched his own brother Henry with 16,000 Prussian troops across the Elbe to immobilize the French front. The Duke of Brunswick, with the main force, attacked the French left wing, and drove the Duc de Clermont-Condé, Richelieu's successor, over the Aller on Hamelin and Minden. In order to prevent their complete envelopment, the French were compelled to entirely abandon Hanover. Increased pressure on their front, the turning of their left wing by the Duke of Brunswick, and the capture of Minden on March 8th, obliged the French to give up their positions on the Weser. Fearing to be cut off from the Rhine, they hastened westwards between Lippe and Lahn. Unfavourable weather, bad roads, and floods rendered their retreat extremely difficult, and pursuing enemy cavalry unceasingly harassed the retreating troops. Only remnants succeeded in reaching the Rhine. Clermont saved himself by speeding across it at Wesel. German cavalry appeared before Deutz and Emmerich.

The Duke of Brunswick established his headquarters in Münster, whilst Prince Henry of Prussia hastened to Saxony to watch Soubise's movements in Franconia and cover Frederic's right wing. Had Broglie's corps not stood its ground between the Lahn and the Main, Soubise's Army would have been involved in Clermont's precipitous retreat. As it was, Broglie's tenacity saved Soubise, who originally intended marching with the Austrians against Frederic to avenge Rossbach. But after Clermont's departure he did not venture to move. Frederic's flank being thus secured, the King could turn his attention to the Austrians and Russians, who were pressing him hard on the Oder in 1758. Frederic

could spare no troops to pursue Soubise, when the latter decided to retreat up the Main and entrench himself on the Lahn. Despite his failures, and the ridicule earned by his headlong flight at Rossbach, Soubise still enjoyed Mme de Pompadour's favour. He encamped at Hanau, reinforced his Army by 7,000 Würtembergian troops, and prepared to attack Brunswick's left wing. But he came too late to save Clermont from a fresh disaster.

Ferdinand of Brunswick crossed the Rhine at Emmerich, and, at the head of 30,000 men, attacked Clermont on June 12th between Wesel and Cleves, throwing him back on Crefeld. It was Clermont's intention to fight here a decisive battle. He had concentrated all his available divisions, numerically stronger than those of his adversary; but the *moral* of his infantry was already so shaken that he could only rely on his cavalry and artillery. By the time evening came Clermont's centre had been broken through. Despairing of being able to rally his troops, Clermont ordered a retreat on Cologne. Although he only lost 4,000 men and 5 guns, he was completely discouraged, and shortly afterwards the French Government replaced him by General Count Contades. Whilst the latter busily endeavoured to reorganize the beaten Army, Ferdinand of Brunswick captured Wesel, Düsseldorf, and Roermond, and sent detachments over the Meuse which plundered the countryside as far as Brussels.

Himself an officer of Marshal Saxe's school, Contades gave the French a new plan of campaign and succeeded in out-maneuvring Brunswick, whom he compelled to withdraw to the Meuse; at the same time he sent troops under General Chevère to the right bank, with orders to destroy the bridges over the Rhine and drive Brunswick from that river. Soubise, on the other hand, received instructions to advance from Hanau to Lippstadt and close the Osning Passes.

Brunswick hereupon abandoned the left bank of the Rhine so as to avoid having his retreat cut-off. The recovery of the left bank was hailed with enthusiasm in Versailles, and the Court rewarded Contades with a Marshal's baton. During the summer Contades crossed the Rhine with the object of pushing the enemy back over the Weser, whilst Soubise succeeded on October 10th, in repulsing Ferdinand's flanking

corps at Lutternberg. As crowning-point of their campaign the French stood before Minden.

Ferdinand of Brunswick threw himself into the breach, took up his position at Soest, and thus prevented a junction of the two French Armies. Contades would not risk a battle, and Soubise withdrew to his winter quarters on the Main. Bereft of support, Contades decided to abandon Westphalia ; placing the Rhine between himself and the enemy, he pitched his camp on the Roer. Brunswick did not follow in pursuit, but retired into winter quarters near the sources of the Lippe and the Ruhr, thereby defending the sally-ports which lead into Germany.

About the same time Frederic went to rest near Dresden, exhausted by a fatiguing campaign in the course of which he crossed Silesia in all directions and won the battles of Zorndorf and Hochkirch. Marshal Belle-Isle, the French War Minister, who ironically compared Frederic's movements with those of a weaver's shuttle, did not guess how apt this comparison was. Frederic had in truth conducted the war *en navette*, moving his Armies up and down with astonishing rapidity, and appearing on the scenes everywhere. He paid scarcely any attention to French operations in the West, and when the French retreated to the Rhine, the two theatres of war became quite separate. The French peril, however, was not yet averted.

The struggle for mastery on the Rhine suddenly assumed new strategic importance. The widely opened gate of the Main, the Lahn valley, the military routes leading upstream along the Ruhr and the Lippe, the narrow passes through the Teutoburg Forest, the River Roer, and the Ardennes, reappeared in the light of day. The Germans learned once more at their expense that France regarded the Rhine as a base of attacking operations against Germany. Despite their flagging energies the French were able to advance as far as the Elbe and the Saale, the reason being that France possessed the left bank of the Rhine from Bâle to Landau, and controlled the Rhineland from Worms to Cologne. So long as these conditions prevailed France could wage her wars on German territory, and even consider the possibility of "conquering America in Germany."

The war continued. During the winter Contades went

to Versailles to report, and to press for Soubise's recall. Soubise retorted by a surprise attack on Frankfurt, hoping by means of heavy contributions levied on that city to restore himself to favour. Acting nevertheless on Mme de Pompadour's advice, he consented to hand over temporarily the command of the Main Army to Broglie. When the new campaign began in the following spring Contades had assembled some 125,000 men between Rhine and Meuse, in the neighbourhood of Cleves. The Army of the Main, 30,000 strong, stood between Lahn and Main around Frankfurt, and sought to push forward towards Castel so as to menace Ferdinand of Brunswick's flank. To avert this danger Brunswick divided his forces. Leaving some 42,000 men near Paderborn to watch Contades, he marched with 28,000 troops against Broglie, and compelled the latter to withdraw on the Taunus Hills. Broglie entrenched himself at Bergen and awaited his adversary's attack. It took place on April 13th, being repulsed by the defender's fire. Ferdinand of Brunswick retreated on Fritzlar. In France joy-bells were rung. Mme de Pompadour congratulated the victor, on whom both Louis XV and the Emperor conferred the baton of Marshal.

After the battle in the Taunus Hills the French Command displayed remarkable energy and foresight. Contades crossed the Rhine to join hands with Broglie, and, by turning Ferdinand's left flank, rolled-up the enemy Army on the Weser. This move, proving successful, forced Ferdinand to relinquish both Hesse-Cassel and Westphalia.

Ferdinand thereupon decided to risk a decisive battle with the object of regaining his hold on Weser. The French also concentrated their strength, for they hoped that the anticipated encounter would not only restore their military prestige, but compel England to come to terms. This could only be accomplished—since there was no longer any chance of vanquishing England either in America or on the high seas—by the conquest of the North Sea coast, and the subjugation of Holland and Hanover.

Ferdinand of Brunswick, with about 37,000 troops at his disposal, sought to lure the enemy from the strong positions occupied by them. The French Army had not completed its deployment when Ferdinand attacked at dawn and

endeavoured to turn its right flank. Suddenly six English battalions, assisted by two Hanoverian battalions, broke forth from the centre and threw themselves, without any orders, on the French cavalry, which, covered by 60 guns, was posted in Contades's centre. This daring onslaught did not take the horsemen unawares. With drawn swords they charged the infantry, but were repulsed by firing squares. Although the French artillery fire proved very destructive, the cavalry finally retreated with heavy loss. The battle, however, was decided on the wings. Broglie's Army remained intact. Contades withdrew on Minden after losing 7,000 men, 6 generals, 450 officers, and 26 guns. Unable to remain in Minden without imminent danger of capitulation, he ordered a general retreat on August 2nd, which degenerated into a panic-stricken flight. Ferdinand followed in hot pursuit, and only with great difficulty did Contades succeed in reaching Giessen, where reinforcements from France and South Germany permitted his broken columns to come to a standstill. The French lost the campaign, and Ferdinand of Brunswick could despatch 12,000 troops to Silesia, where Frederic was defending himself with an energy begotten of despair against Austrians and Russians. Twelve days after the battle of Minden Frederic suffered disaster at Kunersdorf. Prussia's downfall seemed to be impending. Owing to General Fink's capitulation Frederic lost 15,000 men and the fortress of Dresden. He had scarcely 100,000 troops still left him, and no money in his coffers. When the year 1759 came to an end, Maria Theresa and Elizabeth of Russia had every reason to be in good spirits. Not so Mme de Pompadour. As for Frederic, he kept his self-control.

At this critical moment it became abundantly evident that the Prussian King's fate was indissolubly linked-up with the Franco-British world conflict. In 1759, a year which proved almost fatal to Frederic, England achieved her greatest triumphs on the seas and beyond them. Clive conquered India, Wolfe vanquished chivalrous Montcalm at Quebec, Hawke destroyed the French Atlantic fleet off Brittany's coast, and Boscawen scattered her Mediterranean squadrons near Lagos. Relying alike on these successes and on the victorious issue of the battle of Minden, Pitt—greater than

Bolingbroke in days of yore—declined to listen to overtures for peace at Prussia's expense made by Choiseul, Louis XV's new Minister. Mme de Pompadour, who, being essentially realistic, could appreciate the art of political metamorphosis, wrote to the Marquise de Contades after the battle of Minden: “everything is lost, including honour.”

France would have been willing to make extensive concessions to England overseas, but nothing could induce her to relinquish one iota of her position on the Rhine, which she rightly regarded as far more vital to her. On Pitt's refusing to come to terms, Louis XV summed up sufficient energy to mobilize an Army of 125,000 men for a vigorous campaign between the Main and the sea. Contades was recalled in consequence of his defeat at Minden, and replaced by Broglie. Ferdinand of Brunswick could only muster 70,000 troops, and Frederic's numerical resources were by comparison still less. As against 225,000 Russians, Swedes, Austrians, and Imperials, the Prussian King could not put more than 100,000 men into the field when the fifth year of this deadly war dawned.

The French again set themselves the task of conquering Hanover, and again the enterprise failed. When 1760 came to an end, Frederic could book another victory—that of Torgau—to his credit; but, in the West, the warring parties re-entered their old winter quarters. Although the French troops were in better spirits than at the beginning of the war, France had lost her attacking power. Only for the fact that she controlled the Rhine, her Armies would have been obliged to withdraw beyond the Meuse within her natural geographical frontiers.

In 1761 Soubise—who despite his incompetence retained Mme de Pompadour's favour—returned in triumph to the battlefield. By dint of incredible efforts Louis XV succeeded in increasing his forces to 180,000 men, three-fourths of whom were Frenchmen. Soubise commanded on the Lower Rhine, Broglie on the Diemel.

Ferdinand of Brunswick's troops numbered 80,000. The French maintained themselves in Cassel, took Wolfenbüttel and Emden, but were unable to cross the Weser line; on February 12th they defeated Ferdinand at Fritzlar, only to be beaten themselves the following day at Langensalza;

and on July 16th despite the junction of their forces, they were compelled at Vellinghausen, near Hamm, to retreat. In short, their numerical superiority asserted itself nowhere.

When, in 1762, they resumed the offensive, their strength failed them already at the start. They proved incapable of bringing about a decisive issue, and on November 1st were even obliged to evacuate Cassel. But on that same date an armistice was concluded between Paris and London. For the second time England left her ally in the lurch. Just as she had done at Ryswyk in 1697, now also she departed from the scene of military operations, after sacrificing her leading statesman, in order to garner her rich harvest.

Frederic had expected events to take this turn ever since George II's death, which occurred ten days after the battle of Torgau in 1760. He was prepared for his ally's desertion by a tract entitled *Considerations on the German War*, which appeared immediately after that monarch's demise, and which, after enumerating all the burdens imposed on England by Pitt's policy, concluded that Hanover was in nowise endangered. This latter fact being incontestable, thanks to Frederic of Prussia, who had successfully resisted the whole of Europe, including Russia, in arms, and owing also to the weakening of France, it became possible for Little Englanders of Bute's stamp to conclude peace, however eloquently Pitt might thunder against such a shortsighted and blatantly egotistical policy.

England's material security being assured, Pitt the Idealist found no longer any listeners. Bute, who succeeded him, did not judge England to be in any further need of a "Continental sword," and contented himself with the profit reaped by her beyond the seas. France renounced all claims to Canada and India. But she did not renounce her position on the Rhine.

Despite England's desertion, Frederic remained invincible. He earned the reward of his tenacity in 1762, when the Empress Elizabeth's death removed Russia from the ranks of his enemies. Thanks to Russia's neutrality, he drove the Imperials from Silesia after defeating them at Burkersdorf on July 21st. After a final defeat at Freiberg on October 29th, the German Estates gave up the game, and, following Russia's

example, declared themselves neutral. France now abandoned all hope of pushing the war, with the sole aid of Austria, to a victorious conclusion, and sought to transform the armistice with England into a general peace. Maria Theresa likewise laid down her arms. The Peace of Hubertusburg between Austria and Prussia simply confirmed the provisions of the Treaty of Breslau.¹

Frederic triumphantly fought the fight for Prussia's existence and thereby sealed Prussia's future greatness. He did not fight—this essential fact must be insisted upon—for the *German* cause. But he redeemed conditions in Central Europe from their chronic instability, and prepared the way for the creation and grouping of new Powers therein. Henceforth Austria and Prussia counterpoised each other in Germany. "Poor divided Germany is henceforth a World Power and a real nation," said Thomas Carlyle, Frederic's biographer, who revered in that monarch "the last of the Kings."

France's political philosophy, which savoured strongly of casuistry, enabled her to wage the Seven Years War, not against Germany, but as guarantor of the Peace of Westphalia against the King of Prussia only. She emerged from it wiser by experience.

The Rhineland and its adjacent territories suffered cruelly from the war. Nevertheless Rossbach shone as a beacon amidst the prevailing gloom and heralded the dawn of a new era of German prosperity, for Frederic's generalship had broken the hitherto uncontested power of France to create mischief within German territory. A curious light on the conditions prevalent at the close of the Seven Years War is shed by a letter of Mme de Pompadour to the French Minister Choiseul, in which she wrote:

"We have nothing more to hope for in Germany. At all times Germany has been the Frenchman's grave, and during the present war our prestige itself has been laid to rest there. . . . The best thing to do is therefore to conclude peace. It will not be easy to come to terms with the English, whose pride is swollen by victory and who are by nature enemies of the human race, and especially of the French. . . .

¹ *Vide* p. 207.

England and France cannot remain friends for long. Mutual hatred, commercial envy, conflicting interests, and hostile alliances must soon cause the two countries to take up arms against each other again. . . . So do your best to conclude peace under the most favourable conditions possible, and then prepare for the next war."

CHAPTER X

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RHINE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

With a light heart—France's recovery after 1763—England and commercial world supremacy—Incorporation of Lorraine with France—Naval and military reorganization in France and political reorganization in Europe—Choiseul and Mme Dubarry—War of American Independence—First partition of Poland—Death of Louis XV—France's alliance with America—France's war of retaliation in the colonies—Frederic the Great and Joseph II—France's *clientèle* in the Rhineland—Great Britain acknowledges the independence of the New England States—Great Britain's error—Death of Frederic the Great—Disorder of the French finances—Joseph II and the Barrier Treaty—The birth of national feeling in Belgium—Prussia and Holland—France before the Revolution—The Revolution and the Alsatian Estates—Austria and Prussia in the East—Leopold II and Frederic William II—The Revolution and French foreign policy—Padua and Pillnitz—Reaction and Revolution—France enters the war—Austro-Prussian alliance—Dumouriez and French policy on the Rhine—The first Revolutionary war—Failure of the French offensive in the Netherlands—Imperial Coronation and Congress of the German Princes—Plan of an offensive in Champagne—Propaganda of the printing press—The Swiss Guard in the Tuilleries—Marseillaise and royalist propaganda—Prussia on the Meuse—The French Thermopylæ—Dumouriez and Kellermann—Goethe and the Duke of Brunswick—Battle of Grandpré—Cannoneade of Valmy—Retreat of the Allies—The guillotine—Custine takes Mayence and Frankfurt—Conquest of the Netherlands by France—Battle of Jemappes—The French Revolution and the Rhineland—Louis Capet and French policy on the Rhine—England enters into the breach—Pitt the Younger—Triumphal progress of the Revolution—Robespierre—Dumouriez and Coburg—Battle of Neerwinden—The Prussians recapture Mayence—War of position in the Palatinate—Pichegru and Hoche—Wurmser and Brunswick—Toulon's fall—Convention and Coalition—Battle of Fleurus—Möllendorf, Blücher, and Hohenlohe in the Palatinate—Retreat of the Allies across the Rhine—Loss of the left bank of the Rhine—Prussia turns towards the East—Peace of Bâle.

FRANCE abandoned with a light heart, in 1763, by the Treaty of Paris, her claims to a colonial empire. According to Voltaire's *obiter dicta*: “nous avons perdu quelques arpents de neige au Canada.” The most brilliant representative of French *esprit* could afford to write thus owing to the strength of France's European position. France, however, by no

means definitely renounced her colonies. Mme de Pompadour, who died in 1764, was quite right in declaring the Peace of Paris to be a mere truce in the hostilities between France and England.

No one could foretell when the struggle would be resumed, but France proceeded to undertake without delay all necessary diplomatic and military preparations in view of it. Assuming her to recover shortly her old strength at home, she could, thanks to her control of the Rhine, confidently afford to risk a new clash of arms. Although she lost the Seven Years War, France set a rare example of a truly national policy, whereas Great Britain, on the contrary, manifestly never anticipated that she would have one day to defend her maritime supremacy anew against Louis the Great's descendants.

France already made the first move in the game against her British rival before the Treaty of Paris had been concluded. On November 2nd, 1762, Choiseul ceded Louisiana to Spain by a secret convention. The ostensible reason was to compensate Spain for the loss of Florida, the real motive being to create a hostile neighbourhood between Spain and England in North America, and thereby to oblige the Spanish Crown to seek a *rapprochement* with France. When England—her usual practice after a successful war—turned her attention exclusively to business, and in her eagerness to assure her commercial world supremacy momentarily forgot political ambitions, France gained time to re-establish her political predominance by increasing her *clientèle*, and thus prepared the way for the formation of new ties. She sought friends and allies on the Rhine, in the Mediterranean, in the East and North, and Overseas; and neither her financial straits, nor the weakening of the monarchy, nor the ever growing symptoms of social dissolution, could prevent her for a single instant from pursuing her definitely set national aims. The French nation, incomparably strong in its ancient inheritance, with its gaze invariably fixed on the future, and yet capable of enjoying and utilizing to the utmost the passing hour, soon found its path to new goals.

King Stanislas Leszczynski of Poland died in 1766, whereupon Lorraine became *de facto* a French province. This fact amply compensated the Court of Versailles for the loss

of Canada, Louisiana, and the East Indies. At about the same time Gribauval enriched France with his epoch-making invention of horse artillery, which for the next half-century ensured her superiority on European battlefields in respect of mass fire. On the other hand, Louis XVI had the incontestable merit of reorganizing the French Navy.

To Lord Bute, who defended the Treaty of Paris before the House of Commons, Pitt the Elder replied with prophetic words: "you are," he said, "leaving France the means of re-establishing her naval strength." And, as a matter of fact, only a few years later, France's Navy counted 82 line-of-battleships and 70 frigates, with 74,000 sailors, 20,000 gunners, and 8,000 guns. In 1768 her fleet repressed an uprising in Corsica, sold to France by Genoa, and appeared before Tunis, at the estuary of the Nile, and in the Dardanelles. The Mediterranean was dominated by the *fleur de lis* and Gibraltar isolated. French frigates gave chase to the pirate galleys of North Africa; and if Choiseul renounced conquering Tunis, he did so only because he did not wish to lose Turkey's friendship, friendly relations between Paris and the Sublime Porte being in his eyes of more importance than the possession of Africa's Mediterranean coast.

After consolidating her alliance with Spain and Naples, renewing—despite the antithesis implied thereby—her friendship with Poland, Russia, and Turkey, obtaining considerable influence over the New England States in North America, and increasing the number of her clients on the Rhine, France felt herself once more in a position to pursue a policy based on a combination of her own armed strength with her political alliances. Herein events favoured her. In 1768 a Prince of the Saxon Electoral House, Clement Wenceslas, ascended, as French *protégé*, the spiritual throne of the Treves Archbishopric. The Elector of Mayence vainly endeavoured to prevent this election, and England openly protested to the Chapter of Treves against it. The Treves Archbishopric, the corridor of the Moselle, Coblenz, and the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein nevertheless passed within the French sphere of influence.

When, in 1770, Mme Dubarry's influence overthrew the Duc de Choiseul, the re-establishment of France's political prestige was progressing satisfactorily, and the program

sketched in Mme de Pompadour's letter¹ not far short of realization.

Events followed each other in rapid succession, and a momentous conflict which arose beyond the seas played into France's outstretched hand the ace of trumps.

England's administration and fiscal policy alike contributed to arouse discontent in her American colonies. Especially in Boston feeling ran high in consequence of an abatement of the duty on tea, the immediate effect of which was to paralyse smuggling, one of the main sources of the prosperity of Boston merchants. At an early stage of the controversy, France prepared to side actively with the colonists. On the other hand, when the first partition of Poland took place in 1773, France took good care to avoid intervention, and contented herself with leaving the indigestible booty to her Russian, Austrian, and Prussian rivals, whose attention was thereby diverted from the West.

The first partition of Poland—Frederic II receiving West Prussia, Austria Galicia, and Russia the region east of the Duna and Dnieper—attracted Prussia within the fatal orbit of the Polish problem ; she thus found her hands tied on the Vistula at the very moment when new storm-clouds were gathering in the West. Catherine II of Russia was sagacious enough not to let her attention be absorbed by her Polish policy. Her eyes were also riveted on the Bosphorus ; by causing her grandsons to be baptized respectively Alexander and Constantine, she proved the value she attached to Peter the Great's legendary testament, according to which orthodox Russia claimed Constantinople. The struggle for the Dardanelles—the antipodes of the struggle for the Rhine—entered herewith on a new phase.

In the struggle for the Rhine a lull set in, although France had not yet everywhere pushed forward her frontiers as far as that river, and for the time being gave her preference to a policy of *clientèle* in the Rhineland. But the struggle for the Dardanelles, which in 1453 seemed brought to an end by the fall of Byzance, now reassumed its historical importance as a factor of world politics.

When Louis XV, whom in earlier days his subjects surnamed the Well-Beloved, died in 1774, those French

¹ See p. 234.

artillery officers who assisted Turkey in her war with Russia hastened to Versailles so as to be on the spot whenever the French war of *revanche* with England should break out. Happenings in America facilitated its outbreak.

In the spring of 1776 Silas Deane, of Massachusetts, arrived in Paris to request France's help. The American Trade War meanwhile developed into a War of Independence. When the States issued, on July 4th, 1776, their Declaration of Independence, France's helping hand was clearly visible behind the scenes. Less than two years later, on February 6th, 1778, America concluded an alliance with the French Crown, and immediately afterwards war broke out between England and France.

American liberty did not constitute the underlying motive which induced France to resume hostilities against her traditional foe; that motive must be sought in France's unquenchable desire for *revanche*. But a world conflict between the two Powers resulted, bound-up, as usual, with internal German strife.

After the death of Maximilian III of Bavaria, the last descendant of the Imperial branch of the Wittelsbachs, the Emperor Joseph II, basing an inadmissible claim on utterly irreceivable evidence, stretched out a grasping hand towards Lower Bavaria. On Prussia protesting, Joseph II demanded that the House of Hohenzollern should forgo its hereditary right to Ansbach and Bayreuth, in return for which renunciation he undertook to relinquish his claim on Lower Bavaria. Frederic II replied by mobilizing two Armies, which he despatched across the Moravian and Bohemian frontiers. But the intervention of France and Russia put an end to this "war" in 1779 before any bloodshed. For the first time France showed marked restraint in Europe and forwent an attack on the enemy in Hanover, in order to concentrate her forces against England in America. The German balance of power remained undisturbed, but sufficient material had none the less been accumulated for a future decisive struggle between Austria and Prussia.

Events on the Rhine meanwhile pursued their course. In 1782 a brother of Joseph II dispossessed the Cologne branch of the Wittelsbachs of its heritage and gladly continued the francophile policy of his predecessors. Over 150 nominally

independent Rhenish principalities were at this epoch included in the protectorate which France had continued to exercise ever since the seventeenth century.

England, in the meantime, found herself engaged in a deadly grapple with her old American colonies, France, and Spain. The great duel was fought out on land and sea without England being able to recover her former supremacy. When the French fleet reappeared on the high seas in full fighting trim ; when the Spaniards threatened Gibraltar ; when French and American forces defeated British Armies ; when England's brutal exercise of the right of capture at sea drew upon her the hostility of Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland—a political upheaval of world-wide dimensions seemed imminent. England nevertheless proved able to surmount these colossal difficulties. She attacked anywhere her numerous enemies showed the slightest signs of weakness, she bore up bravely in defeat, and ceased offering resistance to her American colonies' emancipation once she recognized, not only that a continuation of the struggle was beyond her strength, but also that command of the seas and the supremacy of British trade and industry are of more importance for the British Empire than mere territorial possessions.

On September 3rd, 1783, France and England concluded peace. Viewed concretely, it only brought France a few African settlements and the Newfoundland fishing banks, which formerly belonged to her. But, on the other hand, French fleets victoriously asserted themselves alike on the American coast and in the Indian Ocean, and at one time well-nigh rendered possible an invasion of Ireland.

Although France had only put forth half her strength, England was greatly weakened. France desisted from attacking Hanover, and neither in Flanders nor the Rhine Basin did any encounter take place. The outcome of the war implied a salutary warning for England, the foundations of whose Empire were rudely shaken. Lord Bute's ill-advised desertion of Prussia in 1762 was thus atoned for.

Alike in 1762 and 1783 England's statesmen committed, from a British point of view, a very grave error. They did not recognize the fundamental importance of the Rhine and the consequent necessity of fighting France *there*. And yet only so long as the French were in uncontested possession of

the Rhine could they be a menace to England and England's world empire. French predominance in Europe rested on the Rhine, the control of that river enabled the French nation to perpetually satisfy its craving for expansion and its instinctive will to power.

Frederic II, who on his death-bed could truly say that his life's work had been accomplished, retired from the struggle after the conquest of Silesia and after having secured Prussia's predominance in Germany. When he died, on August 17th, 1786, Europe was to all intents and purposes ripe for the suppression of that "enlightened autocracy" which he personified. Two new factors of primordial importance arose. On the one hand, the demand for individual liberty, which had been growing rapidly, if silently, became henceforth irresistible; on the other, nations were beginning to claim the right to shape their own destinies. The appearance of these factors fatally led to a general upheaval of such gigantic dimensions as to momentarily engulf all those problems of political frontiers and spheres of interest which had hitherto been paramount in international relations. In France matters were swiftly coming to a head. Her social and intellectual development had reached a point where a further postponement of the inevitable crisis caused by irreconcilable antagonism between the old and new order of things was impossible. France was on the eve of a revolution.

The successes obtained by the French, in conjunction with their American Allies, against England, sufficed only to temporarily consolidate the French Crown's vanishing prestige. France's financial straits were such that Louis XVI's counsellors proved unable, while there might yet have been time, to create a diversion abroad from increasing difficulties at home. The ties linking France, in consequence of Louis XVI's marriage with Marie Antoinette, to the Court of Vienna, could not save the French Government from its *impasse*; but they constituted an additional and very serious impediment.

In 1787 a movement took place in the Netherlands which had the effect of rekindling ancient divergencies between the Provincial Governments, on the one hand, and the House of Orange, as hereditary Stadholders, on the other. This furnished Joseph II with an opportunity of denouncing the

so-called Barrier Treaty, whereupon Frederic William II of Prussia, Frederic the Great's impulsive and unreliable successor, marched into Holland as champion of the House of Orange, with the object of suppressing the uprising of the "Dutch Patriots." For the reasons stated, France was not in a position to throw the whole weight of her strength into the balance.

Great Britain, Prussia, and the House of Orange concluded a Triple Alliance and suppressed the Dutch insurrection. The French and Austrian Armies were brought to a standstill before the Scheldt Gate. France avoided seeking a decision by force of arms. As for Joseph II, he became involved in an ugly dispute with his own Flemish and Walloon subjects, and found himself threatened in Brussels by a popular movement having for its object to substitute the national right of self-determination for well-meant, but autocratic, reforms undertaken by an absolute monarch. This movement marks the birth of Belgian national feeling.

Great Britain was no more able than France to throw her full weight into the balance in the Low Countries. George III had become a lunatic, a mishap which compelled Pitt the Younger, the new pilot at the helm of the British State, to steer his ship with particular care. Fortunately for Great Britain, France, for the first time in the latter's history, proved incapable of taking advantage of the situation thus created, and pushing forward the French frontiers to the estuaries of the Rhine and Scheldt.

The limits thus imposed by circumstances on her rival's expansion satisfied Great Britain. So long as the Netherlands continued to remain a British sphere of influence, so long as France did not break through the gate of the Scheldt and occupy the Flemish glacis, as she had in days of yore broken through the Argonne Passes and the Burgundian Gate in order to lay hands on Alsace and the bulwarks of the Upper Rhine, Great Britain did not feel compelled by any urgent military necessity to intervene. Nevertheless consciousness steadily gained ground in Great Britain that the French occupation of Alsace was a fundamental determining factor of general unrest in Europe which threatened to become chronic.

On August 10th, 1787, a Prussian Army entered Amster-

dam, reinstated the last scion of the House of Orange in his rights, and then withdrew without seeking any compensation whatever on the Rhine. This episode did not disturb England in the least. But although Pitt the Younger formed a more correct estimate than Bute of the value of Prussia's friendship, he miscalculated the force of the obstacle placed by the revolutionary explosion in France on the latter's power of expansion. That obstacle was destined to be surmounted within a very brief span of years.

However great the explosive strength of the Revolution, however deep and far-reaching the transformations wrought by it both within and without the French nation, it did not at any period of its development affect the fundamental principles on which French foreign policy has from time immemorial been based. France was never less pacifistic than at the moment she proclaimed the Rights of Man and substituted the idea of international community for that of dynastic interest. The impetus which at every epoch of her history drove her irresistibly towards the Rhine did not slumber in consequence of the Revolution.

By a historic fatality, the abolition of the privileges of the nobility and higher clergy on August 4th, 1789, coincided with an encroachment on the rights of those German Estates seated on the left bank of the Rhine whose autonomy had not been forfeited in consequence of "reunions." Between the Burgundian Gate and Sélestat were still ten seigniories, including Mömpelgard and Rappoltsweiler, with some ninety communes, belonging to Würtemberg alone. German ecclesiastical property was scattered over the slopes of the Vosges, but the protests of the German Estates remained unheeded. Neither the arguments adduced by individual seigniors nor the strong representations of the Reichstag served in the slightest degree to dam the swiftly flowing tide of the Revolution, which swept like a gigantic wave over Alsace, submerging the few remaining imperial enclaves—long since effectively lost to the Empire—in Alsace, and finally inundating the Swiss territory of Mulhouse and uniting it to France.

Austria and Prussia at first declined to intervene in what they regarded as an internal French conflict. Whilst the foundations of a new social order were being laid on the

Seine's banks, Austria's and Prussia's hands were tied in the East. In 1789 Emperor Joseph II and Empress Catherine II both waged war on Turkey. Success attended their arms ; Austrian and Russian troops occupied Bessarabia, Moldavia, and Walachia. Misjudging the political needs of the hour, Frederic William of Prussia called out his Army, Frederic the Great's creation, and demanded compensation in Poland in the event of either Austria or Russia retaining possession of Turkish territory. This policy had the effect of diverting attention, alike in Vienna and Berlin, from happenings on the Rhine. A menace of war between Austria and Prussia suddenly darkened the Eastern European horizon. It was not a strife begotten of elementary necessity, but a conflict artificially engendered by a narrowly conceived *politique de cabinet*. And meanwhile the first flames of a fire of unprecedented dimensions became visible in the West.

Joseph II's death enabled Austria to avert the danger and emerge from the confusion into which she had been thrown by that impulsive monarch's all too hasty reforms. His brother and successor Leopold II reigned only two years, but this short time sufficed him to consolidate Austria's position at home and abroad, and to ensure a certain stability for her foreign policy. He pacified Prussia by unimportant concessions ; made peace with Turkey ; conducted negotiations with France, regarding the latter's violation of imperial and feudal rights in Alsace, with firmness and dignity, whilst skilfully averting, however, all danger of warlike complications ; and withal, true to Habsburg tradition, sought to make use alike of friend and foe, of the Prussian King and the French Revolution, in order to further Austria's interests. The Eastern crisis fizzled out like a damp petard. Frederic William of Prussia had to content himself with a success more apparent than real, since he assisted Turkey to come to terms with Austria and Russia, whilst obtaining by his mediation no profit for himself ; in the result he found himself compelled to conclude an alliance with Vienna in view of the ever growing danger in the West—a danger, which in 1791 became unpleasantly acute. His fidgety and demonstrative policy earned him most unjustly the reputation of a fire-eating Jingo—an opprobrious epithet which this monarch, a dreamer enamoured of occultism and beautiful

women, and entangled in the meshes of a net spun by intriguing courtiers, by no means deserved.

Whilst in Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, the Cabinets discussed the Turkish question, and the notion of a European balance of power in the Near East was being born of the struggle for the Dardanelles, the French Revolution developed from a social upheaval to a movement of national regeneration. The Revolution clothed France's traditional lust of expansion in the phraseology of new humanitarian ideas derived from Rousseau and the *contrat social*. Thus arrayed in new and splendid raiment, and inspired with a vigour hitherto unknown, the French ideal of power arose from the blood-soaked soil of France, and spread its wings for a triumphant flight across Europe.

This transformation was effected with astonishing rapidity within a few years.

On May 11th, 1774, Louis XVI ascended the throne of his forefathers; in 1777 he appointed Necker Minister of Finance, but dismissed him in 1781, the same year in which the hapless Dauphin, known to history as Louis XVII, was born. With Calonne as Minister of Finance, the Court of Versailles lived lavishly on loans from 1783 to 1787, and on February 22nd, 1787, it convened a meeting of notables in order to discuss and sanction six financial measures. In contradistinction to this meeting of notables, the Parliament of Paris proclaimed on May 3rd, 1788, the principles of a national constitution, limiting the autocratic power of the Crown. On May 2nd, 1789, over 1,200 elected representatives of the three Estates—Church, Nobility, and Bourgeoisie—assembled at Versailles in response to a royal summons, to deliberate on the subject of constitutional reform.

The session of the States General opened on May 5th, and on June 17th the *Tiers Etat* took the reins of power into its own hands and constituted itself as National Assembly. On June 27th the King yielded to the demands formulated by this new and unconstitutional body; he ordered the ecclesiastical dignitaries and the nobility to deliberate and vote in future together with the *Tiers Etat*; and he completed his submission “to the will of the people” by recognizing the Revolution as the legitimate source of civic rights and liberties, thereby investing it with greater authority than he

himself ever possessed. On July 13th, on the proposal of General de Lafayette, who won his spurs during the American War of Independence, the National Assembly decreed the formation of a National Guard. The next day the Bastille—which symbolized for the French people the tyranny of past centuries—was stormed and its garrison massacred. On July 17th the mob compelled Louis XVI to don a tricolour cockade. On August 4th Church and Nobility voluntarily renounced their historic privileges, and on October 6th the Royal Family was brought by force from Versailles to the Tuilleries and there placed under national supervision. By June of the following year France had become a Constitutional Monarchy ; the National Assembly decreed freedom of thought, confiscation of the property of the Church, suppression of all hereditary titles, and introduction of universal suffrage. A great tide of emigration set in and flowed towards the Rhine, Brittany, and England. The “ideals of 1789” prevailed all along the line.

When, on July 14th, 1790, Louis XVI took the oath of allegiance to a Constitution which founded its sovereignty on the popular will, all the objects set itself by the revolutionary movement seemed accomplished, and the Revolution was surrounded with the halo of a great and epoch-making constitutional reform. Europe viewed the progress of the movement with unconcealed sympathy, unconscious of the nature of the developmental forces at work behind it.

On April 2nd, 1791, an untimely death carried-off the man who had hitherto stood between the Court and the people, and succeeded in artificially keeping the Revolution within constitutional limits. Mirabeau’s demise proved the signal for throwing open the dikes, and the waters which had hitherto been contained by them swept like an irresistible torrent over the banks. On April 18th Louis XVI, whilst on his way to visit his confessor, was arrested and obliged to return to the Tuilleries. Aggrieved and mortally offended, he now sought assistance from his brothers and the sovereigns of Europe. Marie Antoinette, who had long since forgotten her former somewhat frivolous amusements at Trianon, and who felt the blood of her illustrious mother pulsating in her veins, appealed to her brother, Emperor Leopold II. The French emigrants, for their part, carried on a brisk agitation

at the various Courts in favour of armed intervention. On June 20th, 1791, the Royal Family escaped from Paris with the intention of reaching Metz, whose garrison the King anticipated leading against the capital. But only five days later the fugitives were recognized and stopped at Varennes, and brought back as prisoners to Paris.

On July 6th, 1791, the Emperor Leopold II issued from Padua an invitation to all the European Courts to espouse his brother-in-law's cause. On August 27th Frederic William II of Prussia, forsaking Frederic the Great's tradition, concluded an alliance with Leopold at Pillnitz, with the aim of checking the progress of the Revolution ; and the Prussian monarch gave the Comte d'Artois, Louis XVI's brother, the assurance that the Allies would support Louis. The Comte d'Artois interpreted the Convention of Pillnitz, originally framed as a purely defensive pact, as an offensive alliance against the new *régime* in France ; Kaunitz in Vienna, Bischofswerder in Berlin, continued to pursue their sterile *politique de cabinet* ; whilst in Paris, on the other hand, a colossal struggle proceeded apace between two irreconcilably antagonistic conceptions of society. Europe was henceforth divided into two camps, which for convenience' sake were labelled respectively Reaction and Revolution.

Louis XVI once more averted a catastrophe by openly dissociating himself from his brothers and proclaiming, on September 14th, 1791, the Constitution drawn up by the National Assembly. The Constituent Assembly was dissolved, and the Legislative Assembly substituted for it. The Revolution appeared to have come to a standstill. But it was only a lull in the storm, which broke forth afresh with increased violence on Louis vetoing the laws directed against emigrants and priests. The Girondins came into power, took over the government, and resumed an active foreign policy. Louis saw himself compelled to declare war on the Elector of Treves.

Roland and Dumouriez, the heads of the Girondin Ministry, incorporated the national political tradition. Out of the seemingly chaotic mass of new ideals agitating men's minds, that tradition suddenly arose again undiminished and assured the continuity of French policy. On March 18th, 1792, the French Government formally asked the Emperor Francis II —Leopold II having died meanwhile—to repudiate all treaties

entered into by him and directed against the independence, security, and sovereignty of the French nation ; further, to undertake to live in peace and friendship with France. These demands were put forward by his Majesty's Ministers, and Louis XVI, as constitutional Head of the State, signified his approval. The French Note declared in threatening language that there could be no doubt that Austria wished to humiliate and intimidate a proud and free people, and keep it in suspense until such time as its adversaries should be ready for an attack.

On April 4th the Vienna Cabinet replied that if Austria were to consent to demobilize her Army and withdraw from her agreements with a third Power, two indispensable conditions must be fulfilled beforehand by France : firstly, satisfaction must be given to those German seigniories on the left bank of the Rhine whose rights had been infringed by the Revolution ; secondly, the French Government must take adequate measures at home to repress movements calculated to cause uneasiness to other countries.

France refused to accept this reply. At his Ministers' request, Louis XVI himself appeared in the National Assembly and moved, conformably with the provisions of the constitution, "That war be declared on Francis, King of Bohemia and Hungary." Without a dissentient voice, and almost without debate, the fanatical enthusiasts of liberty adopted the resolution. France welcomed war as a means for propagating her revolutionary ideals abroad ; the Girondins, for their part, hoped thereby to revive their own waning prestige and consolidate their position in regard to the Jacobins.

The feudal Powers of Europe could not ignore the challenge without forfeiting their *raison d'être*. But only in Coblenz, the headquarters of the *émigrés*, was France's declaration of war received with jubilation—a jubilation shared alike by French legitimists and French revolutionaries. A perfectly natural phenomenon. The same blood coursed through their veins, and, whatever the secondary divergencies dividing them, one dominant trait characterized all Frenchmen—the expansive, aggressive spirit of a nation possessing the most developed political instinct and the nimblest mind of any nation in Europe.

Without much conviction Austria and Prussia entered the

lists. If Emperor Francis II and King Frederic William II personally inclined to wax enthusiastic about the "crusade," preached with such fervour already in 1790 by Edmund Burke, formerly an ardent apostle of American liberty, in his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, their subjects were far from admitting the necessity of this new war. The *intelligentsia* was almost unanimously won over to the "ideas of 1789," and the most illustrious minds in Germany hailed with unconcealed joy the advent of the Rights of Man and individual liberty. In the result, the States indissolubly bound up with the old order of things were unable to wage the war as a fight for ideals. Monarchs might take the field at the head of their Armies and accompanied by their Ministers; but the monarchs were not backed by their peoples. The latter perceived the dawn of a new era, they felt on their brow the breath of a wind from the West heralding, as they fondly thought, a morrow of glorious sunshine.

Whereas Austria and Prussia took up the gauntlet thrown them, Empress Catherine II of Russia carefully bided her time. The "Northern Semiramis" skilfully incited the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin to take immediate action, whilst she herself firmly resolved not to send a single Russian trooper to the Rhine, but to await the propitious opportunity, when, her German rivals having their hands full in that region, it should be possible to extend Russia's frontiers in the South and West. Catherine's dilatory tactics weakened Austria and Prussia in the same measure as they proved a precious encouragement to revolutionary France.

France's *clientèle* on the Rhine trembled when Dumouriez reminded it of the obligations incumbent on its fealty. The Electorates of Cologne, Mayence, and Treves were flooded with French emigrants, the freedom of action of their rulers being greatly impeded in consequence. The Rhenish Electors feared the *sans culottes* even more than the undisciplined hordes recruited around Coblenz and Mayence by the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Rohan, and the outbreak of hostilities placed them in an unenviable predicament. Even the Elector of Bavaria's position became awkward when Dumouriez demanded information as to whether or not Bavaria intended joining the coalition—in which case, added the French Minister grimly, the Palatinate would no more be

spared than the King of Bohemia's territories. This threat required no explanation. The shadows of Mélac and Montclaer crossed the stage.

This time also French policy adhered to its traditional principle that France did not declare war on the German Empire as such, but solely on Austria, thereby asserting again France's right, as guarantor of the Westphalian Treaty, either to make war on the Imperial Estates or take up such other attitude towards them as she might deem fit and proper. Whether Richelieu, Mazarin, Fleury, or Choiseul spoke on behalf of the old absolutist *régime*, or whether Dumouriez the Revolutionary raised his voice on behalf of a "proud and free sovereign people," the purport of the message remained identical, the means employed to further the end in view did not vary. The fact that 20,000 Frenchmen fought in the ranks of the anti-revolutionaries did not deprive French policy on the Rhine of one iota of its strength, although in 1792 France did not yet call out her sons to conquer that river, but only to defend their country's honour and safety.

The first war of the French Revolution began. The left bank of the Rhine became the theatre of operations; Strasbourg and Lille, the most important of Louis XIV's conquests, became the strategic poles of new campaigns based on the experience gathered in former ones.

The Revolutionary Government in Paris decided to carry the war immediately over the frontier and thus enable its troops to fight on foreign soil. It cared not whether the resignation of thousands of officers belonging to the aristocracy, and the consequent decrease of discipline, weakened the French Army; it asked no questions concerning either the Army's numerical strength or its equipment; it ignored the number and condition of the magazines. It contented itself with drawing-up a plan of campaign regardless of means or space or time. This plan aimed at sweeping the Austrians from the Low Countries before the cumbersome coalition could be set in motion, and flinging the French troops through the valley of the Meuse and the Moselle corridor across the Rhine.

The Revolution had hitherto moved within a narrow circle, and a certain continuity could be observed in its progress. Thanks to Louis XVI's pliability it now controlled all the

forces of the State ; it had, in particular, absolute control of the latter's military and naval resources. When France declared war on Austria three Armies were already mobilized, facing North, North-East, and East, on the Scheldt, Meuse, and Upper Rhine respectively. They were numerically weak and insufficiently equipped, but they occupied strong attacking positions around the fortresses of Lille, Valenciennes, Metz, and Strasbourg ; they had a distinct strategic advantage over an enemy advancing from afar, from the direction of the Elbe and Danube, and they could choose their own time and method for striking.

France entrusted Marshal Luckner with the command of the Rhine Army, General Lafayette with that of the Moselle Army, and Marshal Rochambeau with that of the Northern Army. If Paris was in the throes of party strife, France none the less marched. The Government ordered the Northern Army to attack the Austrians, and Lafayette to move from Metz to Sedan so as to cover by a simultaneous attack Rochambeau's right flank ; it further instructed Luckner to remain at Strasbourg to protect the Rhine, and serve as a general reserve for the two attacking Armies. This plan of campaign thus provided for a wide wheeling movement around the right wing. In order to ensure a more intimate contact between Rochambeau and the centre, the Government authorized the Marshal to give orders to Lafayette and direct if need be the operations of the Moselle Army ; but he himself remained dependent on Dumouriez's War Cabinet.

The Austrian Netherlands being but weakly defended, and, moreover, honeycombed with revolutionary ideas, the Paris Government anticipated an easy victory. It determined to give battle to the Allies on the Lower Rhine instead of the Sambre, and with its mind's eye already saw the Republican Armies entering Brussels in triumph.

On April 29th the French columns crossed the frontier. But the campaign ended rapidly and ingloriously. In wild haste the "champions of liberty" fled before the Austrian frontier guard ; and had Duke Albert of Saxony, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, been bold enough to follow resolutely in pursuit, there can be no doubt that the panic-stricken troops would have been driven back to the gates of Paris.

The outcome of this three days' campaign clearly showed

to what extent the dissolving influence of the Revolution had penetrated the Army. French regular troops were hopelessly routed by Austrian outposts. Only a phantom of the former French Army remained, and no one could foresee whether or not a new Army would be born. But it was certain that unless the Allies followed on Rochambeau's heels, and if they left Dumouriez time to fill-in the breach, they would infallibly miss, not only the strategic, but also the political, opportunity afforded them. For the French Revolution advanced with giant strides, and gained ground daily far beyond the geographical frontiers of France.

But the Austrians did not follow in pursuit. They were content to lose the campaign methodically, in company with the even more methodical Prussians, before the year 1792 came to an end. Neither Francis II nor Frederic William II of Prussia knew what they were doing—or, rather, missing—when, in 1792, they organized pompous festivities in Mayence in honour of the principle of legitimacy, instead of urging-on their troops to Paris. For they had not, in truth, a moment to lose.

The Austrian and Prussian Allies agreed to march forward in concert; 300,000 troops were called out, but only 150,000 could be mustered. The Allies' plan demanded swift action by a body of men in perfect fighting trim. But such methods were entirely foreign to the ideas of Frederic the Great's pedantic successors. The plan might nevertheless have proved susceptible of realization had the disorganization of the French Army responded to the desires of the partisans of the old *régime*, and had the Bourbons excited anything like the same enthusiasm among the masses of the French population as they aroused among the *émigrés*. For the latter, in their idealistic ardour, the march on Paris appeared in the light of a mere military *promenade*.

Under these circumstances there seemed to be plenty of time to spare. Francis II was crowned with great pomp at Frankfurt on July 14th, 1792, the third anniversary of the fall of the Bastille; and a little later, whilst the unfortunate Louis XVI ascended the scaffold on the Place de Grève, a congress of European Princes, accompanied by all the picturesque ceremonial of the Middle Ages, reminiscent of the Crusades, assembled at Mayence.

The glare of torches ignited in Mayence had scarcely died away when the Allies' original plan proved already antiquated. The march on Paris, at first designed merely to rescue the Royal Family, became henceforth a definite war measure.

Duke Charles William Ferdinand of Brunswick, nephew of the victor of Crefeld and Minden, who had formerly fought so valiantly as Prince, and in that capacity led the Prussians to Amsterdam in 1787, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the attacking Army. He fully realized the fact that Prussia waged war outside her natural orbit, and that thanks to this war she risked being fettered on the Marne at the precise moment when troops of the Empress Catherine of Russia were crossing the Vistula with the avowed object of destroying Prussia's newly acquired position between that river and the Oder. Prussia was in danger of being involved in a war on two fronts, which threatened to entangle her forces on remote theatres of operations on which they were very much in the position of plants artificially removed from their natural soil. Brunswick disliked the idea of such a campaign. But *nolens volens* he had to march. Nothing could divert the romantic Prussian King's attention from his pet goal—namely, an advance on Paris, although his Cabinet already found itself entirely absorbed by the turn of events in Prussia's Eastern Marches.

Frederic William firmly resolved to release Louis XVI from the latter's bondage in the hands of the *sans culottes*. After bidding farewell to Emperor Francis II, he betook himself to the headquarters of the French *émigrés* at Coblenz. Here he was received with enthusiasm, and beguiled by sonorous tirades of people who were only too apt to forget their own lack of military preparedness at the sight of Prussia's well-organized and disciplined battalions.

With the well-founded scepticism born of experience the Duke of Brunswick contemplated those French *émigrés* who assailed the Prussian monarch with their advice and urged his Majesty to advance on Paris without delay. The Duke no longer possessed sufficient power to be able to exert a decisive influence on his sovereign and successfully insist on the Prussian Army remaining on the Meuse. Half-heartedly he set out, at the head of an Army bequeathed by the great

Frederic to inferior successors, on a more than hazardous enterprise. Whilst Catherine of Russia pocketed the greater part of Poland, Austria manifestly inclined to leave Prussia to bear single-handed the burden of the struggle, and Great Britain—wisely conscious of her insular and oversea interests—prudently stood aloof.

France made full use of the respite granted her after the inglorious flight of her revolutionary troops in Flanders to refurbish her arms, whether of attack or defence. Thanks to the Allies' pedantry, her unsuccessful military offensive became the political preface to a war destined to fundamentally transform the whole Western world. Dumouriez, the Jacobin Machiavelli, had steadfastly adhered to the belief that Prussia would under all circumstances remain neutral, and for this reason hitherto refused to take the war seriously. Now he saw his country involved in a life and death struggle, with the difference that France henceforth appeared in the *rôle* of the aggrieved party—a *rôle* eminently to her taste.

The name of Brunswick revived old memories of the horrors of the Seven Years War; confronted by this menace the Girondins summoned the whole nation to arms to defend the Fatherland. They sought to conceal the traces of their unsuccessful offensive in the Netherlands beneath a flood of manifestos and speeches, in which they represented the war as a purely defensive one on the part of France. For the first time in history the printing press proved more efficacious than any cannonade, and became a regular instrument of war by means of which public opinion was enthralled. Thanks to the power of suggestion, it became possible, by influencing a nation politically, to increase thereby its military strength.

The Duke of Brunswick allowed himself to be persuaded by Maillet du Pan, an ambassador entrusted by Louis XVI with a secret mission to Prussian headquarters, to issue a proclamation from Coblenz stigmatizing the French democrats and Jacobins as criminals, and threatening Paris with destruction. This brought welcome grist to the mill of French revolutionary war propaganda, and a new rising in the French capital was the immediate reply. The revolutionary clubs loudly demanded the abolition of the monarchy, compelled the Girondins to admit their Jacobin adversaries to a share of power, and established mob rule in the streets. On

August 10th the populace stormed the Tuilleries, gallantly defended by the Swiss Guard. Louis XVI sought protection in the bosom of the Legislative Assembly, which at once decreed the suppression of the remaining royal prerogatives and the institution of a National Convention. The Swiss Guard, left in the lurch, continued to hold the Tuilleries against the infuriated assailants until a written command of their royal master ordered them to cease fire. The faithful servants of France's Bourbon Kings were slaughtered on the threshold of the palace they so heroically defended, and the martyrdom of these valiant mercenaries has deservedly earned for them undying glory.

On the same day on which these tragic events took place in Paris, the Duke of Brunswick's Army pitched its camp near Treves. If it had advanced by forced marches, living on the country through which it passed, pausing neither to eat nor sleep, it might possibly have arrived in Champagne before the dreaded autumn rains set in and the enemy could take adequate defensive measures. As it happened, the Prussians lost the campaign without firing a shot, while still in the valley of the Moselle. Brunswick led 70,000 Prussian, French, and Hessian troops across the frontier, in addition to 15,000 camp followers and a baggage train of 30,000 wagons. On August 20th this Army appeared before Longwy. Estafettes announced the approach of an Austrian corps under Clerfayt, which advanced from Namur to Givet, whilst a second Austrian corps marched on the left flank on Diedenhofen. When Longwy capitulated on the third day of the siege, the Allies rejoiced at their easy success, and predicted that the campaign would be a mere military *promenade*. Unfortunately for them the weather proved unfavourable. The roads were in a deplorable condition owing to the heavy rain, baggage and guns remained stuck in the mud, the troops froze. Part of them, impelled by hunger, ravaged orchards and vineyards, an epidemic of dysentery being the result.

On August 29th the Allies marched on Verdun, which surrendered to them on September 2nd. But this success could not dissipate the Duke of Brunswick's gloomy forebodings, since the Austrians on his left made no headway in their attack on Diedenhofen, and the inhabitants of the country

far and wide showed bitter hostility to the invaders. The *émigrés*, who had fondly dreamt of an enthusiastic reception, were cruelly disillusioned. This was but natural, seeing that they not only sought to return home with the aid of foreign troops, but that their programme was hopelessly unpopular. The deserted latifundia and mortmain property had been distributed among the peasantry, and these measures strengthened the latter's antagonism to the old order of things and made it the most reliable mainstay of the Revolution in the struggle against Bourbon Legitimacy and European Feudalism. This modified the entire aspect of the campaign, and a war originally conceived by the Allies as a "crusade" became henceforth a trial of strength between Austria and Prussia, on the one hand, and France, on the other.

In view of this changed aspect of things, the Duke of Brunswick hesitated to cross the Meuse. Prudence, inspired alike by political conditions, the time of year, the weather, and the physical deterioration of his troops, dictated his hesitation. And before he reached a decision, the French took action. Dumouriez gained possession of the passes on Grandpré and Les Ilettes, and General Kellermann, marching from Metz to Commercy, nearly joined hands with the French Generalissimo, who swore a solemn oath to defend the Argonnes, "France's Thermopylæ," like Leonidas defended the Greek Thermopylæ in days of old.

The Allies now resolved to attack. The Armies of Dumouriez and Kellermann, separated only by a short distance from each other, numbered together some 60,000 men, and stood between the Bionne and the Aisne before Valmy. But the expected battle did not take place. The artillery alone entered into action. Over 20,000 shots were fired, a few hundred corpses strewed the field, and no military decision was reached. This indecisive encounter, which cannot from a military point of view be called a battle at all, put an end to the campaign. And yet, when, on the evening of September 20th, Goethe said that "On this spot a new epoch of the world's history begins to-day," he uttered truly prophetic words. With the eye of a seer Goethe recognized the incommensurable importance for Western civilization of the date on which the insignificant cannonade of Valmy gave birth to a new order of things. Not one of the famous

“decisive battles of the world” has ever produced effects so far-reaching as did the indecisive skirmish at Valmy.

On September 30th, 1792, the Allies commenced their retreat to the Meuse. The “crusade” came to an end. The Republic was proclaimed in Paris, and the French took the offensive in their turn. The “miracle of Valmy” served to reawaken their belief in themselves and their military strength, and to create an imperishable legend.

The Revolution triumphed.

When the Allies crossed the Argonnes, the guillotine was in full swing in Paris, and at the moment when the country-side around Valmy re-echoed to the sound of the guns, the number of victims led to the shambles in the capital considerably exceeded the number of victims on that battlefield. But the *Grande Nation* none the less roused the stupefied world from its torpor, and carried it away by the sheer force of its own irresistible enthusiasm.

With phantastic rapidity the Furies of War were let loose on the Rhine and its conglomeration of little States.

Whilst the Prussians, after losing their baggage train, which remained stuck in the mud, retreated to Luxemburg, and the Austrian corps under Clerfayt turned aside in the direction of Namur, the French attacked on either wing. On September 29th the French Rhine Army, led by Custine, captured Speyer, advanced from thence on Worms, and conquered the whole of the undefended Palatinate. The unfortunate Palatine towns were compelled to repay twice and three times the amount of the contributions levied by the Prussians on the Meuse, and received in exchange the theoretical advantages of the gospel of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. The Allies lost Mayence, where disciples of the Revolution welcomed Custine as an apostle of freedom and the herald of a new era. He took full advantage of his success, crossed the Rhine, captured Frankfurt, on which he imposed a contribution of two million livres, and threw out skirmishers as far as the Lahn; but he did not venture to crown his strategic offensive by an advance on Coblenz, which would have had the effect of cutting off the Prussians from all possibility of retreat on the base of operations.

The political seed sown by French Armies ripened with truly vertiginous rapidity. Everywhere on conquered

German territory Jacobin Clubs were opened, revolutionary committees published stirring manifestos, visionaries from Paris and Mayence fraternized, ecstatic women, intoxicated with the strong beverage of liberty, appeared at French "liberty balls," clad in tunics and with garlands of vine-leaves in their hair. The common people, who had been copiously bled to pay the expenses of the most recent Electors' gluttonous living and debauchery, who for years had been compelled to hospitalize demoralized and parasitic *émigrés*, were favourable to the new revolutionary ideas. Obeying their first impulse, they received the French revolutionary troops with enthusiasm as liberators.

This reverse of fortune sufficed amply to shake the little German States to their foundations, and its repercussion made itself felt as far as Regensburg. Everywhere the reigning Princes prepared for flight. Although the capture of the central position at Mayence rent the Allies' base of operations asunder and reopened the gate of the Main to the French, the effect of this success was incalculably greater from a moral than from a military point of view.

The arrival of Brunswick's advance-guard on the Moselle prevented the Rhine Army from spreading farther over the Hunsrück and Taunus. On October 27th, 1792, Hessian cavalry appeared before Coblenz, and shortly afterwards Frederic William II entered the town with his Prussians. Coblenz and Ehrenbreitstein were thus saved. On December 2nd Prussian and Hessian troops retook Frankfurt. But Frederic William's Army lost half its contingents owing to epidemics, and, although unbeaten, was in a condition of complete exhaustion. The King left it and hurried to Berlin in order to turn his attention to the East, where Catherine of Russia was about to snap away the Polish booty before Prussia and Austria could be in a position to claim their respective shares.

Custine remained at Mayence without being attacked, and sought to win over the entire Rheingau to the French cause so as to be able to erect French vassal States on either bank of the river. On December 15th, 1792, the National Convention issued a decree enjoining French generals to proclaim the "sovereignty of the people" in all occupied territories and to abolish feudal privileges. All hitherto

existing authority was suppressed ; landed property belonging either to the State, or to the former princely houses, or to the latter's " adherents and satellites," was confiscated ; new taxes were introduced and " People's Commissaries " appointed, who by a policy of terrorism prepared the way for setting up the new *régime*. The Convention simultaneously published a Declaration stating that every nation refusing to accept the gifts of liberty and fraternity offered it by France would henceforth be regarded as France's enemy.

About the same time, the counter-offensive undertaken by the French left wing attained its culminating point in the conquest of the Belgian Netherlands and Dumouriez's appearance on the Lower Rhine. The loss of the Southern Low Countries—or what is now called Belgium—was the price Austria paid for the weakness of her positions in that province. Dumouriez assembled 80,000 men in camps at Givet, Maubeuge, Valenciennes, and Lille, and attacked along the whole line. On November 6th, 1792, he encountered the entrenched Austrians near Jemappes, which French troops stormed. When the Duke of Saxony, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, saw his left wing in danger of being enveloped in consequence of a French turning movement, he ordered a general retreat. Thus the French Revolutionary Army secured its first victory in the open field.

Finding themselves confronted by a revolutionary uprising of the Flemish and Walloons, the retreating Austrians abandoned successively Flanders, Brabant, and the Hainaut. Brussels, Antwerp, and Namur opened their gates to their French liberators. Cautious Clerfayt saved what remained of Austria's Army by retreating over the Dyle, Meuse, and Roer to the Rhine. Dumouriez followed on his heels, took Liège, and appeared on December 15th, 1792, before the Ardennes Passes. When the victorious French arrived in front of Aix-la-Chapelle, the National Convention could declare the Motherland to be out of danger.

Three months previously, on September 21st, the Republic had been proclaimed in Paris ; and on January 21st, 1793, the unfortunate Louis XVI went to his doom.

The conquest of the Palatinate and the Belgian Netherlands amply justified the National Convention's proud proclamation. But the matter did not rest here. At the beginning of the

Revolution the French Government enunciated the principle that the external frontiers of States must be determined solely by the nationality of their population. But now, in contradiction with this principle, the French Government reintroduced the old notion of right of conquest ; it became the passionate advocate of "an indivisible Gaul," and loudly claimed the Rhine as France's natural frontier. It thus added the superstructure of the Rights of Man to the ancient infrastructure of Louis XIV's theories, and German ideologists in Mayence, destitute of national feeling, enthusiastically applauded this singular combination.

In its newest phase we find the perennial struggle for the Rhine draped in the robes of a hollow, but outwardly attractive, ideology. At first sight it seemed as if the French came thither as messengers of liberty ; but the mask soon fell. True, democratic theories of society penetrated with France's Armies into the Rhineland ; true, revolutionary France, convulsed by the Terror, fought beyond her frontiers for freedom and equality and fraternity ; but she would permit German democracy to adopt the new gospel only as interpreted by herself, and under the tricolour flag. Revolutionary France stretched her hand towards the Rhine to obtain possession of that river, and "liberated" peoples only to better assure her own domination. Already in March 1792 Dumouriez declared the Alps and the Rhine to constitute France's "natural frontiers" ; and the old feudal arguments adduced in support of this theory by Philippe-le-Bel and Louis XIV were now reinforced by notions derived from the new natural philosophy. The National Convention adopted the classical doctrine invariably underlying French policy on the Rhine. On January 31st and February 13th, 1793, Danton and Lazare Carnot raised their voices in favour of recognizing the Rhine, Alps, and Pyrenees as France's natural frontiers ; and on March 30th the Convention resolved by acclamation to annex the territory of Mayence to the French Republic. Whilst remaining faithful to tradition, the Revolution gained new strength thereby.

Although Louis XVI was executed on the Place de Grève, the Republic none the less followed in the footsteps of the *ancien régime*. From this point of view, the fact that the Republic bestowed the name of Louis Capet on that unfor-

tunate Bourbon sovereign assumes symbolic importance. France's lust of expansion was not peculiar to the absolutist *régime* of her Kings, had nothing specifically dynastic about it, but was deeply rooted in the whole French nation ; this being the case, it inevitably asserted itself, whatever the form of the French State might be. From century to century the French have manifested the same irresistible craving for possession of the Rhine, their object being invariably identical —namely, to assure thereby their uncontested supremacy on the European Continent.

The political offensive undertaken by the first French Republic did not encounter adequate resistance in Germany. The German Princes lacked all interest in the Rhine. The King of Prussia and the King of Bohemia and Hungary, who entered the lists against the Revolution on behalf of Louis XVI, found themselves to their great displeasure engaged in a war with France to which no limits were apparently set. But they could not bring this war to an end, since the Republic had not the remotest intention of concluding peace. Being in possession of the estuary of the Scheldt and of the central position of Mayence, the Republic considered itself sufficiently strong to extend its sway over the entire left bank of the Rhine. New Revolutionary Armies were raised. The distress of the Holy Roman Empire was great ; and Germans themselves cursed its impotence and disunion. The ghost of a Reichstag which haunted Regensburg ventured, it is true, to proclaim a *Reichskrieg* "against the predatory French" ; but this declaration of war fell on deaf ears. It could find no echo at an epoch in which the German nation, in its delirious enthusiasm for new-fangled ideas, was completely unable to perceive the link connecting the present struggle with Germany's past national history.

At this psychological moment England stepped into the breach. Not in order to dam the advancing tide of revolution did she decide to take up arms against the Republic, one and indivisible, but exclusively in her own interest. For the progress of French Armies threatened to submerge Great Britain's Continental glacis. The execution of Louis XVI, it is true, afforded Pitt the Younger a convenient pretext for declining, on February 1st, 1793, to recognize the Republic and breaking-off diplomatic relations with France ; but the

motives inspiring him were eminently practical ones. The Convention replied by a declaration of war on Great Britain and Holland. Pitt accepted the challenge. From a British point of view his action appeared fully justified. Belgian glacis, Scheldt estuary, and southern coast of the Channel were in France's hands ; France likewise menaced Holland, and prepared to set up for the third time her predominance on the Rhine as a prelude to consolidating French hegemony in Europe. England's intervention marked the most decisive moment in the gigantic struggle since the cannonade of Valmy.

When the Convention threw down the gauntlet, England became leader of a European coalition having for its aim to check France's expansion. England knew that she staked her position as a Great Power. Revolutionary France, who had hitherto confronted only despots and their Armies, now found herself faced for the first time by a united nation. The fight for Europe's equilibrium assumed new proportions, which modified its form. England had had time to recover from the disastrous effects of the blow dealt her by the loss of her North American colonies. But despite her lack of financial stability France's strength had likewise increased. She owed her renewal of strength to other sources. Her citizens fought under a tricolour banner bearing the magic device "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" ; they appeared everywhere as heralds of a new era and waged war in the name of ideas, whilst as soldiers they subsisted on systematically levied contributions.

In 1792 the French Republic wrestled with Austria, Prussia, and Sardinia. In the North her troops conquered the Belgian Netherlands, the Palatinate, and Mayence ; in the South they occupied Nice and Savoy ; and a French squadron appeared before Naples. An attempt to capture Sardinia failed, but the appearance of a French fleet on the high seas sufficed to open England's eyes to a very tangible and concrete danger. The occupation of Nice and Savoy was crowned by their incorporation in the French Republic, and France's dream of the Alps as a natural frontier thereby became a reality. But not content with these achievements, the Republic looked yet farther afield, and French propaganda commenced turning its attention to Switzerland, seeking alternately to inveigle her inhabitants by cajolery or intimidate

them by threats. It seemed as though the century-old struggle for the Rhine must enter on its last decisive phase by reason of a simultaneous French advance on source and estuary of that river.

In 1793 France called 500,000 men to arms, and put 270,000 of these into the field as against 375,000 mustered by the Coalition. The latter was a motley gathering, composed of British, Prussian, Hanoverian, Austrian, Papal, Dutch, and Portuguese troops. Russia was the only Great Power conspicuous by its absence. The Empress Catherine gave her blessing to the enterprise, but preferred a substantial repast at Poland's expense to active participation in an undertaking directed against the *sans culottes*. This proved unfortunate for the Coalition, since Russia's policy had the effect of preventing once again Austria and Prussia from concentrating their whole available strength on the Rhine. In addition to Russia, various smaller Powers—Scandinavia, Switzerland, Turkey, the Republics of Genoa and Venice—remained neutral. With these exceptions, all Europe flung itself on the French Republic, which was confronted at the same time by a Royalist uprising in Vendée and Girondin disturbances in Southern France, whilst being torn asunder by bloody dissensions between its own partisans.

Robespierre and the Terror dominated Paris, where events marched with giant strides; where the ephemeral reign of the Goddess of Reason was rapidly succeeded by the not less ephemeral triumph of the Supreme Being; where thousands of decrees were enacted, and the blood of thousands of victims effectually prevented the guillotine from getting rusty; where Girondins were forcibly suppressed by the Montagne, whose death-knell sounded in its turn when Robespierre mounted the dread scaffold.

Whilst these events occurred at the centre of the Revolution, the Republican Armies waged war with varying luck in the Netherlands, on the Rhine, in Italy, and the Pyrenees; whereas the French fleet, which for the third time had been reorganized after a period of dire neglect, took up its position in battle array off the coast of Brittany. France resolutely assumed the offensive with the object of forestalling the enemy.

Already in February 1793 Dumouriez marched against the

Dutch province of Zealand. Rotterdam and Amsterdam seemed lost. But a counter-attack by the Austrians in the neighbourhood of Jülich and Düren compelled the French to retreat over the Meuse on Antwerp. Dumouriez then proceeded to concentrate his troops on the Dyle, and sought to turn the tide of fortune by a determined assault on the main Austrian force. The latter awaited the blow near Neerwinden. The French attack was repulsed with heavy loss, and Dumouriez—mindful of the fate of unsuccessful revolutionary generals—discovered to his consternation that he had lost, not only a battle, but the whole campaign. Young recruits who gaily marched to the attack now deserted *en masse*, and three days after the battle Dumouriez's Army counted barely 20,000 men. In this dilemma the skilful and unscrupulous leader, fearing for his head, resolved to open secret negotiations with the foe, and gave orders to evacuate Belgium as far as the French frontier. The same population which, only a year before, greeted the revolutionary liberators with frantic enthusiasm, but which had meanwhile endured untold suffering in consequence of extortions and excesses, now rose against them and massacred hundreds of deserters and marauders.

Dumouriez forthwith conceived the plan of marching on Paris with the aid of the enemy, in order to overthrow the Jacobin *régime* and proclaim himself dictator. But this scheme failed at the outset. His own regiments mutinied, and on April 5th the victor of Jemappes fled to the Austrian lines.

But the Allies proved once more incapable of taking advantage of their favourable position, and remained stationary on France's undefended northern frontier. Instead of advancing on Paris, they contented themselves with laying siege to Condé and Valenciennes. The Convention in Paris transferred Custine from the Rhine to the Sambre. But it could not save Condé or Valenciennes, which both capitulated to Clerfayt in the course of the summer. After this had taken place the Duke of York, who commanded the Anglo-Hanoverian troops, separated himself from the rest of the Allies and turned aside, for the sake of exclusively British interests, towards Dunkerque. But he did not succeed in capturing it and was obliged to withdraw.

As a result of all these blunders the Allies missed—irretrievably—the propitious opportunity for striking a decisive blow at the heart of France.

The Allies' campaign on the Rhine equally lacked any genial inspiration. They succeeded nevertheless in capturing Mayence, whereupon the Convention sent General Beauharnais, who failed to relieve the beleaguered fortress in time, to the scaffold, in company with Custine. At the same time the Convention proceeded to raise a new Army of 300,000 men to defend the country thus gravely imperilled. It suppressed the rising in the Vendée with ruthless barbarity. And since, on the one hand, the Allies failed to profit by the fall of Mayence and Valenciennes to energetically attack the central positions held by their adversaries behind the Saar and the Oise ; and, on the other, England abstained from all active support of the Royalists in Vendée ; the campaign of 1793, which had opened under favourable auspices for the Coalition, came to a standstill.

The cardinal defect of the Allies resided in their obsolete methods of warfare. Instead of taking concerted action on the Saar, Austrians and Prussians frittered away their strength in isolated skirmishes. The enemy had thus time to hurry reinforcements to the theatre of operations and renew the fighting on a large scale under the leadership of younger generals. The Convention despatched Pichegru and Hoche to the Rhine with peremptory orders to thrust back the enemy over the river at all costs. And behind these orders stood the ever-present menace of the guillotine.

On November 27th, 1793, Hoche, in agreement with Pichegru, led the Army of the Moselle against the Prussians at Kaiserslautern. He was repulsed, but soon recovered himself, summoned the Rhine Army to his assistance, and on November 29th Pichegru's and his united forces attacked a second time, only to be repulsed again. But the Allies were everywhere on the defensive and their power of resistance was gradually being exhausted. The French, on the other hand, continuously received reinforcements ; and the resourcefulness and spirit of initiative of their leaders contrasted favourably with the antiquated methods of the Allied generals.

On December 1st, Pichegru, supported on the flank by

Hoche, commenced the third French attack. Day after day he repeated the herculean effort, and by December 24th the Austrians fell back on Wissembourg in a state of utter exhaustion. Their Commander-in-Chief, General Wurmser, declared in despair to his Prussian colleague, the Duke of Brunswick, that he could hold out no longer. On December 31st Wurmser retreated over the Rhine, abandoning the left bank to the enemy.

The fortune of war, long undecided, now suddenly turned against the Allies. In view of the pressure on their left flank, the Prussians were compelled to withdraw. Mayence, it is true, had been recaptured from the French, but the campaign on the Rhine none the less proved a dismal failure. Full of mutual distrust, and amidst vehement mutual reproaches, the two chief Continental partners in the Coalition separated. They had long since implicitly relinquished all hope of crushing France—a relinquishment fittingly symbolized by Frederic William's departure, as early as September 29th, for the Polish frontier.

Great Britain, who by her feeble conduct of the war on land and sea largely contributed to the Allies' discomfiture, now grew alarmed at the prospect of a rupture of the Coalition. She herself had reaped no glory, having seen her fleets repulsed alike at Dunkerque and Toulon. The latter fortress, a stronghold of the Girondin insurgents, was incapable of withstanding the bombardment of General Dugommier's artillery, and capitulated after a siege during which one of Dugommier's lieutenants, a Corsican named Napoleon Bonaparte, appeared for the first time in the limelight.

The capture of Toulon by the Jacobin Army marked the decisive turning-point in the first Coalition War. The Allies had wasted the whole year and squandered their resources in a useless war of position. Pitt now determined to strain every nerve in order to induce, by means of liberal subsidies, the Allies to continue the struggle; and he also proceeded to reorganize Great Britain's plan of naval operations. He succeeded in persuading the Berlin Cabinet, despite the latter's reluctance, to adopt his way of thinking; and on April 19th, 1794, an agreement was concluded at The Hague, under the terms of which Prussia consented to place 62,400 troops at the disposal of England and Holland. But misunderstandings

at once arose. Marshal von Möllendorf, the Duke of Brunswick's successor, declined to transfer his Army from the Palatinate to Holland and to entrust Austria with the task of defending the gates of Germany. He insisted on covering the Rhenish flank, whilst the Austrian main force and a mixed Anglo-Dutch-Hanoverian Corps, numbering in all 170,000 men, moved towards the Sambre and took up a position between Kreuznach and Worms. 85,000 Austrians and auxiliaries were concentrated around Heidelberg and Heilbronn to defend the Neckar Gate.

The efforts made by the French exceeded those of the Coalition, and the Convention put a cyclopean Army of over 600,000 men into the field, which if not, perhaps, adequately drilled and disciplined, none the less constituted an instrument of war formidable by reason of its very massiveness. The enormous power of expansion inherent to the French Revolution grappled in a life and death struggle with a world which fought—in accordance with time-honoured military traditions—for a social and political system that was rotten and worm-eaten to the core, and which therefore only fought half-heartedly and without conviction. This held good not only of the Continental Powers, but also of Great Britain.

The campaign of 1794 culminated in a flanking attack organized by the French on a large scale on the Northern front. Pichegru commanded the Northern Army, Jourdan the Army of the Meuse and Sambre. Both generals resolved to leave no stone unturned in order to achieve success.

The Allies were content to let them take the initiative, and after three unsuccessful attempts Jourdan broke through the enemy lines; he crossed the Sambre, captured Charleroi, and thereby decided the fate of the campaign. Pichegru fought meanwhile with varying success in West Flanders. But after a few set-backs he thrust back his opponents and conquered the entire strip of coast between Furnes and Ostend. On July 11th the two victorious French Armies joined each other at Brussels, whence, with their strength accrued by considerable reinforcements, they advanced towards the Meuse without encountering any resistance worth mentioning. The exhausted Austrians could hold out no longer. The Imperial troops were driven over the Roer, the Anglo-Dutch forces

over the Waal, and were separated from each other. Here-upon the Emperor Francis ordered his Army to retire across the Rhine.¹

No protest was raised in Germany against the Imperial orders, in consequence of which Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Coblenz, Bonn, and the whole of the Lower Rhine were abandoned to France and the Revolution, and the positions of the Prussian and Austrian troops in the Palatinate and on the Moselle rendered untenable. Paris naturally jubilated. The Convention immediately despatched ambassadors to "Batavia" and "Rhenania" to greet the population in the name of liberty and the French Republic. The French occupied successively Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and Maastricht, while the British Corps retreated across the Yssel and Ems to Bremen, where it embarked for home. Holland lay defenceless at France's mercy; and when winter came the Dutch fleet, blocked by ice in its ports, surrendered. Pichegru found the gates of Amsterdam open, and proclaimed the Batavian Republic. France attained her goal. The estuary of the Scheldt, and that powerful flanking position on the estuary of the Rhine which had three times baffled Louis XIV's attempts to conquer it, were now, after a struggle lasting more than a century, in France's hands.

The Naval Powers attributed to Prussia the responsibility for the disaster. But, as a matter of fact, its real reason must be sought in the lack of unanimity among the Allies, and in the entire absence of any great strategic idea.

When the main force of the Allies abandoned Aix-la-Chapelle, the campaign on the Upper Rhine collapsed automatically. The Imperial troops, who had already crossed over to the right bank, and on the left bank only retained possession of Germersheim and the bridgehead of Mannheim, now received orders to evacuate the left bank completely. There remained consequently nothing for the Army to do but to retreat and concentrate anew around Mayence. Germany lost the entire left bank of the Rhine. The latter had not been temporarily evacuated in the course of warlike operations as the result of strategic manœuvres, and in the hope of retaking it in a

¹ Already on December 31st of the previous year (1793) the Austrians retreated across the Upper Rhine in Alsace. See p. 267. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

future campaign ; political calculations dictated its abandonment by Germany.

The Prussian Army withdrew from the Rhine to lend support to Prussia's policy on her eastern frontier and prevent Baron Thugut, the successor of Count Kaunitz, betraying Prussia's interests to Russia. The Austrians continued hostilities ; not, however, for the sake of the Rhine, nor even for that of the Austrian Netherlands, but to defend in Western Germany the approaches to their own country, and also with the object of safeguarding imperilled household possessions of the Habsburgs in Italy.

The shots fired at the siege of the Rhine bridgehead at Mannheim, and of the fortresses of Germersheim and Mayence, announced the end of the war waged by the Anglo-Austro-Prussian Coalition ; and they reverberated in the valleys of the Rhine like a dirge. Yet it seemed as though nothing momentous had occurred. The Germans did not regard the loss of the Rhine's left bank in the light of a mutilation of their national territory. The lethargy in which the Holy Roman Empire had been steeped for centuries now developed into a state of torpor which effectively prevented the growth of national feeling. There was nothing imposing, nothing recalling the grandeur of the proud fall of a hero of classical antiquity, in this decline of the Holy Roman Empire. On the contrary, the latter presented a piteous sight as it tumbled headlong into an abyss where no sun's rays could ever hope to penetrate.

The fate of the Rhine was sealed as soon as Prussia and Austria turned aside from it. But the fundamental truth that the possession of this river is of greater importance for Germany than any extension of her eastern boundaries—that only when Germany is securely seated on the Rhine can she ensure peace for herself and Europe—soon became manifest. An acre on the Rhine is of more value to Germany than an entire Polish province.

Frederic the Great set Prussia a clearly defined aim in the East when he took Silesia and thereby drew a strategic line of communication extending from the Moravian plain to the Frische Haff. Of the land situated beyond this line, only the Baltic Provinces, where ancient German settlers form a thin layer on the surface of the population, can be regarded

as having any affinity with the German political sphere. Prussia and Austria committed a grievous error when they decided to share in the second and third partitions of Poland with the object of keeping Russia away from their original frontiers. The partition of Poland, which diverted the attention of Austria and Prussia from the Rhine, proved in the long run fatal to both.

When, on April 5th, 1795, Frederic William II concluded a separate peace with France at Bâle, a peace which officially confirmed Prussia's withdrawal from her Western Marches, he did but publicly admit the already existing fact that the Rhine henceforth constituted, not a German, but an international frontier, stream. The French Republic entered on Louis XIV's inheritance.

The true significance of the Treaty of Bâle lay in its secret clauses. By these France undertook to indemnify the King of Prussia for any territory lost by him on the left bank of the Rhine in the event of the Republic permanently extending its boundary to that river. North Germany was neutralized, and Prussia authorized to take charge of Hanover should the latter refuse to accept the obligation of neutrality. Thus Frederic William's "crusade" against the Revolution ended by the Prussian monarchy dropping a low curtsy to the Republic.

The Peace of Bâle, which abandoned the entire left bank of the Rhine, from Bâle to Emmerich, to France, cast its ominous shadows over the decrepit Holy Roman Empire; for behind this treaty loomed the imminent danger of a dissolution of Germany into three distinct spheres: an Austrian sphere, comprising the South-Eastern portions of the Reich; a Prussian sphere, embracing its Northern parts; and a French sphere, containing its Western provinces. Since France's sphere of influence already included the new Batavian Republic and Switzerland, the entire basin of the Rhine to the left of the river passed into French hands. Success crowned a policy of expansion consistently pursued for a thousand years.

By the time France and Prussia concluded peace, the Terror was at an end and the Jacobin *régime* in Paris had been overthrown. But if Robespierre's downfall marked a return to moderation in France's home policy, her foreign

policy remained unchanged. A conquering State, which did not hesitate to sacrifice the flower of its manhood on the battlefield, adopted the revolutionary principle. The only thing henceforth needed to complete the irrevocable ruin of the ancient order of things was that a genius—one of those supermen whose apparition is as rare as it is portentous, who mould humanity as though it were molten wax and shape its destinies for a millennium like the baker kneads dough—should arise from out of this seething ferment begotten of the overthrow of the old hierarchy, of the dissolution of all traditions—a genius impelled by the demon of insatiability, capable of uniting an indomitable individual will to power to his nation's irresistible craving for expansion, and of consciously adapting that synthesis to his own far-reaching purposes.

In this case the struggle for the Rhine was bound to be submerged in a still vaster struggle which could be limited by no political frontiers.

CHAPTER XI

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RHINE PROBLEM FROM THE PEACE OF BÂLE TO THE PEACE OF AMIENS

An epigram of Schiller's—French military administration in the Rhineland—Joseph Görres—Dismemberment of the Rhineland—France's "natural frontiers" and the Convention—*I.e. 13 Vendémiaire de l'an IV*—Great Britain continues the war—The campaign of 1795—The campaigns on the Rhine and Po in 1796—Bonaparte in Italy—Mantua—Archduke Charles, Jourdan, and Moreau—The French offensive on the Rhine—The French in Swabia and Bavaria—Skirmishes at Neresheim and Teining—Battle of Würzburg—Jourdan's retreat and the popular uprising—Marceau's death—Moreau before Munich—Moreau's retreat on the Rhine—Encounters at Mantua—Arcole and Rivoli—Mantua's fall—Charles on the Piave and the Austrian retreat in Styria—Preliminary peace of Loeben—Bonaparte conquers the left bank of the Rhine on the Po and the Adige—The new Cæsar—Peace of Campo Formio—Negotiations in Rastatt—England isolated—England dominates the seas—"The grave of England's prestige"—*L'armée d'Angleterre*—The French in Switzerland—Bonaparte's conquest of Egypt—Importance of the battle of Aboukir—The second coalition—England as protectress of small States—The Bourbons—Campaign of 1796—Lecourbe in Grisons—Scheerer on the Mincio—Marshal Suvaroff—Archduke Charles in Swabia—Battle of Stockach—Assassination of the ambassadors in Rastatt—Uprising in Grisons—Strategic unity of the German and Italian campaigns—Masséna in Switzerland—Fighting near Zürich—Battles on the Trebbia and near Novi—Bonaparte before St. Jean d'Acre—Tactics of the Allied Armies—Convention of Alkmaar—Korsakoff and Masséna—Battle of Zürich—Suvaroff crosses the Alps—Charles before Philippsburg—Forstmeister Wrede—The turn of luck—Bonaparte at Fréjus—*Coup d'état* in Paris and Triumvirate—The Rhenish problem and the freedom of the seas—Bonaparte and Pitt—A letter of Baron Stein's—Campaign of 1800—Moreau on the Rhine, Masséna in Genoa—Bonaparte crosses the Mont St. Bernard—Battle of Marengo—The Fontanone and the Rhine—Battle of Hohenlinden—Peace of Lunéville—Bonaparte and the Rhinelanders—The Rhenish tricolour and the annexion—Pitt and Addington—Peace of Amiens.

THE year 1795, of which such decisive events marked the opening, proved very inauspicious for Germany's struggle on the Rhine. A fatalistic trend of thought had been engendered, under the influence of which this river came to be universally regarded, not only by the German princes, but also by the German people, as marking Germany's western frontier.

Schiller eloquently voiced the prevailing view when, referring to the Rhine, he penned the bitter epigram :—

Treu, wie dem Schweizer gebührt, bewach' ich Germaniens Grenze,
Aber der Gallier hüpft über den duldenden Strom.

The population of the Rhineland, German by descent but alienated from German citizenship, was placed in a difficult position. The French victors' right of conquest, superadded to enthusiastic reveries begotten of revolutionary propaganda, served only to enhance the universal confusion. The great ideal of freedom expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man still exerted its influence, and ardent apostles like Joseph Görres, irresistibly attracted by the magnetic lights of Paris, hastened thither to partake at its source of the pure water of liberty. But, taken as a whole, French propaganda was too zealous, the French authorities in occupied territory were too dictatorial in their attitude, for their success as proselytizers to be durable. For if the Germans lacked a national conscience, they by no means lacked national characteristics differentiating them very sharply from the French, who arrived on the Rhine with the wand of peace in the one hand and the conqueror's sword in the other, with the object of dismembering that river's basin.

The dismemberment of the Rhineland, the destruction of its national unity, were more keenly felt by the inhabitants of a region accustomed for centuries to foreign invasion—whether the invaders were French, Swedes, Danes, or Spaniards—than those humiliations which are inseparable from foreign domination. The French occupants divided the Rhineland longitudinally and set up a Customs barrier in the bed of the river, so to speak. The population, it is true, benefited by the abolition of feudal privileges, but at the expense of its unity.

On October 1st, 1795, the National Convention in Paris adopted the terms of a report drawn-up by one of its members, Roberjot by name, who had been sent to the Rhine to study on the spot the question whether it be preferable to annex the occupied territory purely and simply, or to erect a buffer State on it. For various sound reasons Roberjot did not hesitate to conclude in favour of annexation. He pointed out that the left bank of the Rhine was admirably suited to

become a base of military operations. He likewise dwelt on its fertility, and on its industrial and mineral wealth, the possession of which would enable France to develop branches of trade which had hitherto been monopolized by Great Britain. The Convention therefore decided to incorporate the left bank of the Rhine in the French Republic, although such a decision was scarcely compatible with the national right of self-determination originally proclaimed by the Revolution. A frontier already traced by Julius Cæsar with a view to subjugating Germans and Eastern Celts was re-erected, regardless of the fact that the Germanic elements living between Meuse and Rhine had since then evolved a highly developed national civilization, and that Mayence had for three centuries past constituted one of the most flourishing centres of German life.

Five days later, on the 13th of the month of Vendémiaire in the year IV, Colonel Bonaparte suppressed a rising of the Paris mob, thereby preparing the way for the Directory and for his own subsequent ascent to power. The imperialist programme triumphed.

But France was nevertheless not yet quite sure of her booty, since not only Austria, whom France had no reason to fear, but an adversary infinitely more redoubtable than the Habsburgs, namely Great Britain, contested her claim to the left bank of the Rhine. For her own purely egotistical reasons, and having regard to the magnitude of British interests involved, Great Britain could not admit without further ado an exclusively French solution of a thousand-year-old struggle for the Rhine, the effect of which would be to re-establish France's hegemony in Europe. So long as Great Britain remained faithful to her policy of the European balance of power, she could not countenance the "gallicization" of the Rhine. Hence Pitt's resolute attitude. He would not hear of peace, advanced £4,600,000 to the Vienna Cabinet to defray war expenses, suspended both the Habeas Corpus Act and cash payments by the British Treasury, and determined to settle once and for all, whatever the cost might be, the question of British *versus* French supremacy.

Military operations on the Continent in 1794 proved unfavourable for Great Britain, but the British fleet maintained its command of the sea, thanks to the decisive victory of June 1st. Naval inferiority, however, was a matter of

quite secondary importance to France, so long as French Armies remained unbeaten. For France, an agricultural and self-sufficing country, could afford to defy attempts to starve her out by means of a blockade.

When, after an indecisive campaign in 1795, the adversaries concluded a truce on the Rhine on New Year's Day 1796, no thought of peace inspired them. The French Directory decided to strike, if possible, a smashing blow at Austria, and with this aim in view to carry on operations simultaneously in the North and South, on the Rhine and the Po. It increased the Rhenish Army to 160,000 men, confided to the leadership of Jourdan and Moreau, the latter of whom replaced Pichegru, whose success during the past twelve months had failed to come up to expectations. 80,000 men were held in readiness for the Italian expedition—20,000 under Kellermann in Savoy and 60,000 under Scheerer on the Mediterranean coast of France. But Scheerer's troops were in so pitiable a plight, ragged and tattered and starving, that their General declined to assume the responsibility of carrying-out orders issued from Paris on February 22nd to invade Lombardy and thus divert the Emperor's attention from the Rhine. Scheerer resigned, whereupon the Directory nominated General Bonaparte, to whom it was indebted for services rendered,¹ as his successor. Promising, in a proclamation dated March 27th, 1796, his hungry and bootless soldiers food and riches and *gloire* in abundance to reward them for all sacrifices and privations, Bonaparte, barely twenty-seven years of age, set out at their head for the land beyond the Alps.

The armistice was still in force on the Rhine when the genius of a new Cæsar, who, carried on the crest of the revolutionary wave, was about to impose his indomitable will on France and Europe, suddenly illuminated the Italian sky as by a dazzling flash of lightning. Like a whirlwind Bonaparte burst into Piedmont, won nine encounters in thirteen days, drove Austrians and Sardinians asunder, compelled Sardinia already on April 28th to accept an armistice, advanced in full career over the Po, stormed on May 14th the bridge at Lodi, and four days later entered Milan in triumph. Within another week the remnants of the Imperial troops were in headlong retreat on the Tyrol, having lost all Austria's Italian

¹ See p. 275.

possessions save Mantua. On July 1st Bonaparte could report to Paris that "the Austrians have been completely driven out of Italy and our outposts are standing on the slopes of Germany's mountains."

The impressionable Italians welcomed the French with enthusiasm and the Governments sued for peace. The fragile political structure of small Italian States collapsed. In mortal fear of the Revolution, ecclesiastical and secular rulers alike craved mercy from the victor. And, in truth, an abundant harvest awaited the latter, at whose feet the accumulated wealth of Italy began to be amassed. Many millions of livres, vast shiploads of provisions, illustrious works of art, treasures of gold and silver, found their way to Paris. The Directory's Commissaries revelled in levying contributions. But the attraction exerted by the revolutionary ideal proved so powerful, and Bonaparte showed himself such a consummate master of the art of doing things in truly great style, that all these extortions assumed the comparatively harmless aspect of political transactions.

In vain did Austria put forth all her remaining strength in a desperate attempt to stem the tide of defeat and relieve Mantua. The Emperor Francis summoned Wurmser with 25,000 picked troops from the Rhine to the Tyrol, whence, having collected another 50,000 men, the Marshal set out to succour that beleaguered fortress. Raising the siege and sacrificing his artillery, Bonaparte advanced to meet him, routed the scattered enemy columns one after another, thrust Wurmser's main force against the Adige, and, after defeating him in seven successive encounters, shut him up in his turn in Mantua (September 1796). Thus did the Italian field of operations, considered in Paris and Vienna alike to be of merely secondary importance, become, as a result of Bonaparte's tactics, the decisive theatre of the European war.

The struggle for the Rhine was now fought on the Po and the Adige. Napoleon's genius contemptuously brushed aside all those plans of campaign which owed their inception to the bureaucratic routine of Cabinets. He reintroduced the "principle of annihilation," according to which a defeated enemy Army must be allowed no respite, but forced to choose in the least possible delay between destruction or unconditional surrender. Henceforth the Corsican could shape

the world as he fancied. Bonaparte's first campaign sufficed to enable this born master of the art of war and leader of men to assert at a single stroke his instinct of domination, to arrive at the full consciousness of his immeasurable superiority, to cast to the winds all shackles of subordination. He did not cease to be a Corsican, since it is beyond human power to abolish heredity ; but he learned to take advantage of his French citizenship in order to realize the colossal creative forces pent up within him. Whilst posing in Italy as a liberator, he firmly resolved that all conquered Italian territory should be united to France, disdainful of the fact that a pusillanimous Directory was willing to restore Lombardy to Austria in exchange for the latter's renunciation of Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine. For a mind like Napoleon's, accustomed to "thinking in continents," the problem of the Rhine was definitely solved ere Austria ever proposed to cede that river's western bank to France. But the Republic nevertheless failed to profit by the possibility held out to it, since if Austria's Armies were annihilated on the Po and Adige, on the Rhine luck did not favour the French cause.

French and Austrians alike wished the campaign on the Rhine to be decisive ; but whereas France intended taking the offensive, Austria resolved to confine herself to purely defensive operations. Various changes had been effected in the Austrian Supreme Command. Clerfayt and Wurmser were replaced by the Archduke Charles and General Latour, the former being nominated Commander-in-Chief. And the Archduke recoiled from what he considered the "monstrous idea" of attempting to break through the French centre.

The French took full advantage of the situation thus created. Jourdan still commanded the Sambre and Meuse Army, but Pichegru, whose republicanism gave rise to doubt, had been succeeded by Victor Moreau. On May 19th began the only campaign on the Rhine waged, along the strategic front from Bâle to Düsseldorf, by two enemy Armies standing face to face on either bank of that river and leaning for support, at each extremity, on the neutral frontiers of Holland and Switzerland respectively. It seemed as though Fate willed that once again, at a momentous turning-point in history, it should be clearly demonstrated that the Rhine does not constitute a strategic frontier, that all the fortresses

and bridgeheads erected on it are merely so many obstacles placed in the way of an advancing Army, and that their tactical importance is strictly limited. Not the general who commands the plain of the Rhine, but the general who controls the passes through the mountains bordering it, is master of the situation. The Rhine constitutes neither a strategic nor a natural frontier, and cannot be directly defended once large Armies stand face to face along the whole length of the field of operations.

The French left flank began the attack. Jourdan crossed the Rhine at Neuwied and pushed forward to the Lahn. But here he encountered the Austrian forces under Archduke Charles, and was compelled to fall back on his base on the left bank of the Rhine. This operation, although in itself a failure, had none the less the result of procuring a strategic success for the French in Alsace, where Moreau, profiting by the fact that the Archduke Charles's hands were tied in the North, crossed the Upper Rhine on June 25th, 1796, at Strasbourg. In response to Latour's urgent appeal for help, the Archduke hastened from the Lahn to the Murg at the head of 24,000 troops. But the French could not be dislodged. Whereupon the Archduke gave orders for a general retreat of the Austrians over the Neckar.

Moreau thus lost touch with the main enemy force. In front of him the Swabians alone remained, and these were no match for the French. Swabia's fate was sealed. On July 19th the Swabian authorities proposed an armistice, and three days later the Swabian contingents left the Imperial Army. Baden hastened to follow this example. Princes, seigniors, ecclesiastical dignitaries, all feared the Revolution so intensely that surrender seemed preferable to a national uprising against the invader. Had the inhabitants of the Black Forest and Upper Swabia only risen to arms, the French would probably never have penetrated into the valley of the Danube. Badenese and Swabians paid dearly for this sin of omission. Heavy, indeed, were the contributions, both in cash and kind, levied by the exacting victor. The Estates asked for peace, which they obtained on condition that Baden and Würtemberg ceded all territory belonging to them on the left bank of the Rhine, and that the fortress of Philippsburg should be dismantled. Shortly afterwards the Saxon con-

tingents, obeying the Elector's orders, abandoned in their turn the Imperial Army.

With the cession to France of the Black Forest Passes, a grave national misfortune befell Germany. Moreau's victory threw open the gate of the Main to Jourdan, who without delay flung himself on General von Wartensleben's Army, which, 36,000 strong, was entrenched on the Lahn, and routed it. Overrunning Hesse and Franconia, the Sambre and Meuse Army drove the Austrians back on Bamberg (August 1st). In obedience to Archduke Charles's orders, Wartensleben retreated towards Nuremberg; but, being hard pressed by his pursuers, he turned aside in the direction of Amberg, with the object of protecting the gate of the Eger.

Archduke Charles retained his presence of mind, and despite all untoward events obstinately refused to regard the campaign as definitely lost. As if by a sudden insight of genius, he resolved to leave General Latour with 25,000 men to oppose Moreau, whilst he himself marched against Jourdan's left flank—a decision not unworthy of a Bonaparte. Jourdan despatched Bernadotte against Wartensleben's positions at Amberg. But by dint of a rapid advance Archduke Charles intercepted Bernadotte, thrust him back on Nuremberg, and attacked Jourdan's main force, encamped on the Pegnitz, in the rear. Thus menaced, Jourdan beat a hasty retreat on Würzburg.

A desperate race began, the Austrians following close on the retreating enemy's heels. But if Charles was able to capture the French rearguard, Jourdan's main Army escaped in the direction of Schweinfurt, where it halted. On September 1st, 1796, Archduke Charles's troops stormed Würzburg; the next day they routed Jourdan's divisions after a hard-fought encounter, and threw them back on the Lahn. Had Charles's regiments not been exhausted by their rapid pursuit, Jourdan would scarcely have been able to save a single man, for the Franconian peasants and Hessian woodcutters, roused to frenzy by the atrocious conduct of undisciplined French hordes, now seized the welcome opportunity to fling themselves with scythes and pitchforks on their tormentors. It was a truly national uprising which seemed to announce itself, at the sound of the tocsin, from Würzburg to the Fulda. The erstwhile proud Army of Sambre

and Meuse was but the shadow of its former self, and Jourdan saw himself compelled to resign his command.

Having accomplished his first aim and eliminated Jourdan's hosts, Archduke Charles proceeded to turn forthwith his attention to Moreau, with the object of cutting off the latter from a possible retreat on Strasburg and compelling him to give battle before reaching the Black Forest Passes. After wasting valuable time during Jourdan's withdrawal on Würzburg, Moreau finally decided on September 16th to retire on Ulm, closely followed by General Latour. Suddenly wheeling round, however, Moreau got rid of his pursuer by dealing him a knock-out blow in a bloody battle at Bibrach, reached the Black Forest, and, passing through the Höllental, emerged on October 12th in the vicinity of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Archduke Charles crossed simultaneously the Murg. Recognizing the peril of his situation, Moreau did not wait to measure swords on the battlefield. On October 21st his Army began its retreat on Alsace and this retreat saved it. But the French offensive had failed all along the line.

Archduke Charles's energy, his troops' courage and endurance, the successful outcome of this campaign, brought encouragement to Germany and reawakened hope in the possibility of her salvation. But, unluckily for the Germans, Bonaparte's triumphs in Italy weighed more heavily in the balance than the liberation of South Germany from her invaders. Jourdan's regiments scarcely reached Alsace when an urgent message suddenly recalled Archduke Charles to Vienna. Mantua's last hour as an Imperial city had struck, and the fortress capitulated on February 2nd, 1797.

Bonaparte was henceforth uncontested master of Italy. The Treaty of Tolentino sealed the Pope's submission, and the French advanced against Friuli. Bonaparte's triumph south of the Alps extinguished the light kindled by Archduke Charles's victories. When the Archduke reached Vienna he found the Cabinet already engaged on secret negotiations, which ripened into the preliminary peace of Loeben, concluded between France and Austria on April 18th, 1797. Austria thus followed the pernicious example set by Prussia when the latter concluded a separate peace at Bâle two years previously. Just as the Peace of Bâle had been a purely Prussian, and not a German, arrangement, so also

the Peace of Loeben was an exclusively Austrian agreement. Germany's higher interests were ignored in either case. France received the Austrian Netherlands and the Italian possessions of the House of Habsburg. Austria, on the other hand, was awarded Venice, Istria, and the Dalmatian coast. This bargain, from which the German cause had certainly nothing to gain, satisfied the House of Habsburg.

The Directory in Paris received the preliminary peace treaty as a present from Bonaparte's hand, and, together with it, the left bank of the Rhine, conquered on the Po and Adige thanks to the Corsican's genius.

The French Republic took advantage of the negotiations regarding a definite peace—negotiations which dragged through the summer of 1797—in order to consolidate its positions on the Rhine, which, being no longer defended, was crossed by French troops in April, who took possession of the Badenese-Palatine-Hessian glacis. Prussia remained sunk in lethargy, whilst Austrian and Venetian negotiators were being brow-beaten by Bonaparte.

A far-sighted English diplomatist, writing at that time, drew a prophetic parallel between Julius Cæsar, who subjugated Gaul's disunited tribes, and Bonaparte, who threatened to crush a disunited Europe under his heel. When, on October 18th, 1797, peace was definitely signed at Campo Formio, the French Republic, begotten of the Revolution, subsisted mainly, if not exclusively, on the Great Corsican's military glory. And if it still made a pretence of upholding revolutionary traditions, these were no longer anything but a cloak concealing a policy of unlimited expansion, which ingeniously combined the methods of Richelieu and Louis XIV with the maxims of later eighteenth-century political philosophy. A medal struck in honour of the conclusion of peace bore the characteristic inscription: “A Bonaparte Italique le 26 Vendémiaire de l'an VI. Il ne combattait que pour la paix et les droits de l'homme.”

The Peace of Campo Formio overthrew the entire political structure of Europe. Austria's renunciation of the Belgian Netherlands and Lombardy in exchange for Venice and the coast of Istria and Dalmatia, and the Emperor's complete abandonment of the Rhine, deprived the latter's basin of the political protection afforded it for many centuries past by the

House of Habsburg. The end of the Holy Roman Empire drew rapidly near. Secret clauses of the Franco-Austrian Treaty expressly provided that the Rhine should henceforth constitute France's frontier; but these clauses did not apply to those territories owned by Prussia on the left bank, the cession of which to France would, under the terms of the Treaty of Bâle, have entailed territorial compensation for Prussia on the right bank—the very thing both Austria and France were anxious to avoid. They therefore allowed Prussia to retain her possessions on the left bank, so as to prevent her setting up any claim to an indemnity elsewhere within the Empire. Formulating this aim in concrete terms, France and Austria mutually undertook to refuse Prussia any further increase of territory. On the other hand, they contemplated indemnifying the other German States expropriated from their property on the left bank, and also the House of Orange; both were to obtain compensation on the right bank, this compensation to be settled in the course of negotiations with France, who reappeared in her old *rôle* of guarantor of the Treaty of Westphalia. Austria also received, in addition to Venice and Istro-Dalmatia—publicly conceded her—private assurances of French support in the accomplishment of her designs on Salzburg and the Bavarian district of the Inn. This placed her in a favourable situation to pursue her anti-Prussian and anti-Bavarian policy.

At the time this was taking place France not only occupied the left bank of the Rhine, but had already taken up her positions on the right bank, by virtue of the iron strategic law that he who possesses that river necessarily commands both its banks. Thus the French stood on either bank, from the Jura to the North Sea, deep in a German-speaking country which is also the most ancient site of German civilization. And they felt quite secure in their possession of this region, which they systematically estranged from its historic traditions by seeking to incorporate it, as a political unit, with the basin of the Seine and Loire, although the latter's natural frontiers are clearly delimited.

The Estates of the Holy Roman Empire, finding themselves left by Austria in the lurch, now opened in their turn peace negotiations with the victor, and sent delegates

for this purpose to Rastatt with instructions to endeavour, by dint of bargaining, to arrive at a compromise.

France enjoyed a peculiarly advantageous position at Rastatt. Having concluded in turn secret pacts with Prussia, Austria, Würtemberg, Bavaria, and Baden, she could play-off successfully one against the other. With the aid of these conventions, and by skilfully raking-up the dust of musty archives which she exhumed, she was able to regulate according to her will the traffic in German territories and populations. Whilst erecting obedient vassal republics at the estuary of the Rhine, on the Ligurian coast, and in the plains of Lombardy, she availed herself of the "ideas of 1789"—long since reduced to a condition of petrified dogmas bearing no relation to reality—and of the principles enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence, to consolidate her hegemony in Europe. Meanwhile France's coffers were being rapidly filled thanks to the contributions levied by her victorious Armies, and trophies pouring in from Italy adorned her art galleries. Bonaparte had won the game and mastered fate. The campaign waged by him with 40,000 troops in Italy in 1796 decided Europe's destiny. France conquered the Rhine on the bridge of Lodi, at Castiglione and Rivoli, under the walls of Mantua. The French Republic reigned supreme in Europe, and, over the corpse of Louis XIV, the testament of Louis XIV had been executed.

When, at the preliminary peace negotiations in Loeben, the Imperial plenipotentiary Count Gallo intimated his readiness to insert in the treaty an express recognition of the Republic, Bonaparte contemptuously remarked that "the French Republic does not need any recognition, since it is in Europe what the sun is in the firmament. So much the worse for those who refuse to see it and to profit by it!" All the European Powers now prostrated themselves *nolens volens* before that rising sun, with the single exception of Great Britain, who, dominated by Pitt's inflexible resolution, persisted in hostilities, although she no longer possessed a single ally on the Continent.

Pitt recognized that Great Britain's vital interests, no less than Europe's liberty, would be jeopardized if France established her domination over the Rhine, and, surrounded by vassal States of her own creation, were in a position to

dictate to the Western world. But Great Britain found herself completely isolated. Prussia had retired from the struggle in 1795. Holland was entirely under French influence, Spain had changed sides and concluded an alliance with France in 1796, the Scandinavian States were exhausted, and Russia remained under various pretexts in the background.

Great Britain waged the maritime campaign of 1796 with ruthless energy. Every State joining hands, whether voluntarily or otherwise, with France became *ipso facto* England's enemy, and had to bear the consequences accordingly. Dutch and Spanish trading vessels were kept back in British harbours or captured on the high seas, whilst their war fleets were victoriously attacked. On February 14th, 1797, Admiral Jervis destroyed the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and on October 11th in the same year a similar fate overtook the Dutch fleet off Caperduin. Both fleets fell victims to the irreconcilable antagonism between France and England; and this eternal dispute had to be settled on sea each time France, by laying hands on the Rhine, sought to build up her supremacy in Europe and assure her hold over the Flemish-Dutch glacis.

When, in 1796, the beaten Armies of Jourdan and Moreau retreated across the Rhine and the confidence of the Directory began, despite Bonaparte's brilliant victories in Italy, to show signs of wavering, Great Britain endeavoured, by opening herself negotiations with Paris, to prevent the weary Austrian Government from concluding a separate peace. Not weakness, but psychological intuition, inspired this move of Pitt's. In October 1796 he despatched Lord Malmesbury to Paris in order to treat in view of peace. But he soon found out that France, being in nowise inclined to renounce any of her conquests, intended in the first place putting Great Britain and Austria asunder. She would not hear of abandoning the left bank of the Rhine. At a conference held in Lille her representatives adopted towards the British delegates a tone usually employed towards vassals, and required from Great Britain an undertaking to abstain henceforth from all intervention in Continental matters; whereupon the conference broke up abruptly, and the British delegates left after declaring categorically that England would never consent to the Rhine becoming a French frontier. Should England,

they added, accept such a proposal, Lille—where that acceptance was signified—would be known to history as the grave of Britain's greatness.

When these words were spoken Europe was still an agricultural continent, the world's trade to all intents and purposes confined to the purchase and sale of colonial produce and raw materials, and industry on the Rhine in its earliest infancy. But none the less, with rare sagacity, Pitt foresaw that an indispensable condition for England retaining her full freedom of action in her relations with the European Continent was the maintenance of Germany's independence, and that this independence, in its turn, depended on the Rhine not falling into French hands.

The depression of that trade which formed the basis of her national existence had not yet fully exhausted England. By breaking off negotiations with Paris, Pitt abandoned all England's Continental agreements to their fate, this fate to be determined by the fortunes of war. He overcame the insurrection in Ireland, which the French insufficiently backed, accepted the heavy burden of a severe commercial crisis, and wrung once more from Parliament its consent to a continuation of the war.

The Directory in Paris, for its part, showed itself not a whit less resolute. It hoped to be able to carry war into the British Isles and to break England's resistance with Irish help. An attempted landing by General Hoche in Bantry Bay in 1796 failed, owing to the weather's inclemency and Admiral Bouvet's hesitation. Bonaparte's genius stirred the glowing embers into flame and mobilized *l'armée d'Angleterre* on the northern coast of France under his command. In February 1798 Bonaparte proceeded on a tour of inspection of the ports of Brest and Cherbourg, Dunkerque and Antwerp, of the coast batteries and warships, of the flotillas of flat-bottomed boats destined for the transport of troops, and of the troops themselves. But he soon returned to Paris, declared the plan to need years of preparation before it could hope to mature, and, diverting the Directory's attention from the Channel to the Mediterranean, indicated Egypt as the immediate goal.

Already on August 16th, 1797, Bonaparte wrote to the Directory that "the time is not far distant when we

shall recognize the necessity of conquering Egypt in order to destroy England." Talleyrand, the Foreign Minister of the Republic, was a convinced adherent of this idea. Respect for the Sublime Porte, which in former times induced Choiseul to keep away from Africa's coasts, no longer weighed much in the balance in 1798 owing to Turkey's decrepitude and disintegration. Behind this decaying empire, moreover, Russia arose, and French policy was to-day quite prepared to allot her, in its calculations, the part hitherto played by Turkey—a part which, it will be remembered, Peter the Great's ambassadors sought already in 1717 to have attributed to their country.¹ The Directory agreed to Bonaparte's suggestion, which opened up boundless vistas, and had, in the eyes of the Paris Government, the further undeniable advantage of removing an ambitious general from the centre of political activity. Revolutionary propaganda meanwhile successfully accomplished its work in Switzerland and furnished a pretext for a French expedition to Berne. The ancient patrician Republic was subjugated, and the funds in its State Treasury confiscated. Hence the moment seemed propitious for organizing the projected eastern enterprise. On May 19th, 1798, a French Expeditionary Corps sailed for Toulon; on June 9th Bonaparte seized Malta, where he overthrew the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; on July 1st France's fleet anchored off Alexandria; and on July 21st the brilliant victory of the Pyramids over the Mamelucks placed Bonaparte in undisputed possession of the whole of Lower Egypt. The road to Syria was opened up. Bonaparte's genial mind dreamed of piercing the isthmus of Suez—a dream which had already haunted Louis XV's Minister d'Argenson—and planned expeditions to Constantinople, and even, following in Alexander's footsteps, to India.

But these ambitious schemes were scarcely hatched when Nelson suddenly nipped them in the bud at one single blow. On August 1st, 1798, the latter annihilated the French fleet under Admiral Brueys in Aboukir Bay, and thereby restored Great Britain's mastery of the Mediterranean, whilst simultaneously destroying legends of French invincibility. Henceforth every Britisher could feel secure on his island, and the triumph of Aboukir, which founded Nelson's

¹ See pp. 190, 191.

fame at the same time as it revived Europe's waning hopes, gave Pitt an opportunity of opening negotiations in view of a second coalition. But the full effect of Aboukir did not make itself felt for many years to come.

While Bonaparte waged war on the Nile, the Directory completed its task of politically annexing Switzerland. It created the Helvetic Republic, and compelled it to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with France and to place 18,000 troops at the latter's disposal. It united Geneva to the French Republic, which thus obtained access to the Rhine's source, and was able to encompass the central Alpine region around Simplon and St. Gotthard simultaneously on the North and South. France tightened still further her grip on the Rhine, by laying hands on the last remaining portion of its left bank hitherto beyond her grasp. Franco-Swiss friendship, inaugurated under Louis XI, and which had long since assumed, as far as Switzerland was concerned, the form of a *clientèle*, thus ended with Switzerland's tutelage. Shortly afterwards Switzerland herself, who had so long succeeded in maintaining her neutrality amidst conflicting rivalries in Europe, became a theatre of warlike operations, and found herself invaded from all sides by hostile Armies anxious to outflank each other.

France's policy in Switzerland afforded Great Britain a welcome opportunity to definitely assume the patronizing attitude of a "protectress of little nations." She understood that in order to ensure the success of her policy of the European balance of power, she would henceforth need the smaller States scarcely less than the larger ones. And, as a matter of fact, this policy, although dictated solely by British interests, proved advantageous to Switzerland, whose political independence it guaranteed.

While these events were taking place the Holy Roman Empire's peace delegates still negotiated with French plenipotentiaries in Rastatt; but no progress could be reported, and when, amidst the maze of diplomatic intrigues, the French suddenly produced the secret Treaty of Campo Formio, by which it became manifest that the Emperor had betrayed the Empire's integrity, the whole laboriously constructed edifice fell like a pack of cards. Not peace, but war, appeared as the inevitable solution of Europe's innumerable difficulties,

for the menace of French predominance sufficed to summon every nation threatened by it to arms in self-defence.

Pitt had done his utmost in this sense. Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Turkey were united in a common purpose—that of driving back the French *conquistadores* and confining them to their ancient territorial limits. But the Coalition committed the grave mistake of deciding to restore the Bourbon dynasty, considered by it as a guarantee of future peace. Thus what should have been a struggle for Europe's liberties against French expansion became a fight against the French nation's right of self-determination.

In the spring of 1799 the great international duel in Europe recommenced. Its fundamental *raison d'être* still remained the Rhine, but the struggle was no longer waged according to traditional strategic principles. The occupation of Switzerland created new conditions. South Germany, Eastern Switzerland, and the plains of Lombardy became playgrounds for hostile Armies. Thanks to Prussia's attitude of indolent neutrality under Frederic William III, Northern Germany steered clear of the war; but the price paid by Prussia for thus averting hostilities on her own territory proved a heavy one, since it consisted in missing the golden opportunity of liberating herself from the shackles of the Treaty of Bâle and taking her share in the new struggle for the Rhine. Her own statesmen doomed Prussia to isolation—an isolation destined to prove fatal to her.

The delegates in Rastatt still deliberated amidst the *débris* of their own illusions when the first shots were fired. But, oblivious of this fact, they remained in session. They still debated—although the erstwhile Imperial plenipotentiaries had meanwhile been deprived of their credentials by the Emperor—when Austria's vanguard retreated from the Lech and war-clouds were gathering ominously around the Black Forest, the valleys of Grisons, and the waters of the Mincio. The delegates still wrangled when the French Rhine Army, now re-christened “Danube Army” and commanded by Jourdan, crossed the Rhine at Bâle and Strasbourg, and advanced through the Black Forest on Ulm, whilst Bernadotte crossed that river at Mannheim to cover Jourdan's left wing and advanced upstream along the Neckar. They still negotiated when, on March 6th, 1799, Masséna took the offensive

in Switzerland, and occupied the strategic sector between the lakes of Constance and Walensee.

In Italy things still remained quiet. Greatly dispersed, French Armies were scattered between the Alps and Vesuvius. The Kingdom of Sardinia and the Republic of Lombardy were united in a Cisalpine Republic, and the Sardinian monarch's authority was henceforth confined to his original island. French troops occupied the Papal State and proclaimed the Parthenopian Republic in Naples, whence the Bourbons fled to Sicily. But France's power nevertheless lacked consolidation, and the newly built edifices revealed ominous fissures and crevices. Populations released from feudal bondage would have been prepared to give all their sympathy to their liberators, had these only understood how to earn it. But pillage and plunder were not methods adapted to this end, and since Bonaparte's departure French discipline in Italy was gravely undermined owing to the fact that mal-administration of generals and commissioners alike had reduced the troops to dire distress.

General Scheerer, who stood with 46,000 men on the Mincio, was not only not the man to put an end to these disorders ; he also proved a failure on the battlefield. Crossing the Mincio on March 24th, 1799, to attack the Austrians on the Adige, he was repulsed and forced to retreat to his original positions on April 5th. Urgent appeals for aid induced the Directory in Paris to order General Macdonald's Army to proceed from Naples to the Po, and to abandon both the Parthenopian Republic and the Papal State.

The Allies, on the other hand, also concentrated their forces. On April 9th old General Melas, whom the Court War Council in Vienna entrusted with the supreme command in Lombardy, arrived at the Adige ; a few days later, on April 15th, the Russian Marshal Suvaroff reached Italy, and 22,000 enthusiastic Russians crossed the Adige to meet their beloved commander. Recognizing the danger threatening the French Army on the Oglio, the Directory in Paris replaced Scheerer by General Moreau ; but when the latter reached headquarters the French troops had already been compelled by Suvaroff to retreat over the Adda. On April 28th they continued this retreat beyond the Ticino river, where General Serrurier's division was cut off and forced to capitulate.

About the same time, near the Danube's source, the French Danube Army under Jourdan collided with the Austrian forces under Archduke Charles. A severe encounter on the woody heights between the Danube and the Lake of Ueberlingen ended, on March 20th, with a complete Austrian victory. The battle of Stockach produced disastrous consequences for Jourdan and cost him the whole campaign. He retreated over the Rhine, whither—since Archduke Charles, not caring to risk a new battle in the plain, neglected to follow in pursuit—he succeeded in bringing his 28,000 troops into safety. But he lost the key alike to the Black Forest Passes and to the Swiss Rhine valley. As for Archduke Charles, he now intended attacking Masséna in the flank. His only reward for the signal victory of Stockach was a blame administered by the Court War Council, which reproached him with having withdrawn too far from the Tyrol. In the Council's eyes Archduke Charles had committed the almost unpardonable error of subordinating Habsburg's dynastic and household interests to the general cause of Germany by driving the French over the Rhine.

Whilst preparing his intended attack on Masséna, Charles despatched General Szatarry with 20,000 men to the Black Forest in order to keep watch on the Rhine. But Szatarry found no adversary left. Penetrating into the plain of the Rhine, his cavalry appeared before Rastatt, where the French and Imperial peace delegates still discussed matters. On the Austrian troops declaring that Rastatt would no longer enjoy the privileges attaching to the meeting-place of a peace conference, but would henceforth be subject to the laws of war, France's delegates decided to leave. Their departure took place on the evening of April 28th. Before the town gates they were assailed by Szekler Hussars, dragged from their carriages, and murdered. No inquiry ever threw complete light on this mysterious crime, which is generally attributed to the Vienna Cabinet.

Although the assassination of the ambassadors at Rastatt created a greater stir at the time in international diplomatic circles even than the events of the war, it did not greatly affect the German people as such, which were too much preoccupied by the desire to liberate themselves from the French yoke. Had the Emperor and his advisers decided to

call out the whole German nation and to substitute universal service for the system of professional Armies, there can be no doubt that the French invaders would have been swept away. But the old Court fossils, steeped in the mummifying traditions of bureaucracy, could not bring themselves to trust the people, whom they preferred to keep in thraldom. True, Tyrolese sharpshooters were not unwelcome to the Vienna Cabinet; but it had a deep-rooted and invincible aversion for Swabian and Franconian peasants. It entertained such strong prejudices in this respect that it even proved incapable of taking advantage of a spontaneous uprising in Grisons, although the success of the Swiss campaign depended on it. Vainly did General Hotze, a born Swiss, urge the advisability of making use of peasants, who, as in days of yore, inspired by elementary fury, rose with pitchfork and scythe against the invader.

On May 3rd the peasants of Grisons, coming from Disentis, where they had massacred every Frenchman they could lay hands on, including the wounded, appeared in the low-lying valley before Reichenau. A desperate battle ensued between them and the French on the banks and overhanging slopes of the Rhine, between Reichenau and Ems; and only after they had been nearly wiped out by a murderous fire from all sides did the survivors take to flight. The French revenged themselves by giving no quarter, leaving the wounded dying on the field, and levelling Disentis to the ground. On May 14th, however, General Hotze took his *revanche* by storming the Luzienstieg and compelling the French to withdraw in a westerly direction. Malans, Mayenfeld, Coire, and Reichenau were taken, and the Grisons part of the Rhine valley fell into Hotze's hands. After the Austrian General Bellegard had cleared the valley of the Inn of French invaders, and General Lecourbe had retired across the Albula, the whole canton of Grisons was lost to France.

Archduke Charles resolved to risk a decisive battle. Manifestly the newly founded Helvetic daughter-republic could only be destined to consolidate France's predominance in Germany and Italy; hence a determined effort must be made to wrest it from her grasp, and thrust the French in Italy back to the frontier formed by the Alps. The struggle for the Rhine appeared in a new light.

For the first time in history the German and Italian theatres of war became a strategic unity. Through the Alpine passes troops hastened from one front to another in order to throw their decisive weight into the balance. The centre of gravity soon shifted from the wings to the middle, to that Alpine foreland in Switzerland situated between the Rhine's source and the Reuss.

When Archduke Charles began to advance, French Armies lay deployed along the entire course of the Rhine, from its source to its estuary. In the Batavian Republic were 14,000 French and 24,000 Dutch under General Brune; in the newly created department of the Lower Rhine, and in and around Mayence, 24,000 men under Dufour and Baraguay d' Hilliers; whilst between Mannheim and Bâle there were 28,000 other troops under Collot, Legrand, and Souham respectively. In the Rhine valley of St. Galle, on the Walensee, and at the Rhine's source, three divisions assembled; two reserve divisions held the interior of Switzerland and the Valais—which was in a state of open rebellion—in check. No such extensive deployment of troops had ever been undertaken by France in the Rhine basin.

On hearing of Coire's fall, and in anticipation of the Archduke's advance, Masséna proceeded to concentrate his forces. On June 4th Charles attacked the enemy positions on the heights around Zurich. He was repulsed, but Masséna, being anxious about the French left flank, beat a retreat during the night of June 6th. Evacuating Baden and Zurich, he entrenched himself off the precipitous heights of the Albis chain, between the Lakes of Zurich and Zug. As a result of this withdrawal, the French lines from Bâle to Bellenz were set in motion and concentrated between the Jura and the St. Gotthard. Meanwhile Archduke Charles occupied Zurich, and his troops carried-out an extensive flanking movement towards the South, in conjunction with successes obtained by Suvaroff in the valley of the Po.

Marching on Milan, Suvaroff drove Moreau upstream and concentrated his own forces on May 14th at Tortona. Moreau could not give battle, since Piedmont rose in his rear against the French, being dissatisfied with the way in which France made the Rights of Man serve her lust of conquest. Moreau therefore retired to the Apennines and the Riviera di Ponente,

abandoning Turin to the foe, who followed in energetic pursuit. Moreau placed his hopes on Macdonald, who approached from Campania, and reached Lucca on May 29th. The campaigns in Italy and Switzerland thus became two parallel actions.

The same day that Archduke Charles unsuccessfully attacked Masséna at Zurich, Macdonald appeared in Tuscany. On June 9th he defeated an Austrian corps near Modena and effected a junction with General Victor, whom Moreau had despatched with a division to meet him. Hereupon Suvaroff recalled his troops from Turin to Tortona in order to attack Macdonald before the latter could join hands with the main French Army under Moreau. The hostile Armies met on June 18th on the Trebbia. Suvaroff beat Macdonald before the slowly advancing Moreau arrived on the scene, and after severe fighting thrust him back on Reggio. Suvaroff, in his impatience, wished to fling himself immediately on Moreau, but the *Hofkriegsrat* intervened, and obliged the Prussian general to waste time and men on useless sieges.

Meanwhile the French were active. Macdonald and Moreau united their forces; the Directory sent out Joubert to Italy as Commander-in-Chief, with instructions to retake Mantua and Tortona. On August 9th Joubert advanced on Tortona, and on August 14th encountered Suvaroff's entire Army at Novi. The battle which ensued on the morrow proved one of the bloodiest of the whole war. Finally Joubert's positions were captured after he himself had fallen, and the French were driven back into the Apennines, leaving 9,000 prisoners and 36 guns in enemy hands. The Allied cause attained the pinnacle of its success, and the struggle between the coalesced strength of Austria, Russia, and Great Britain on the one hand, and revolutionary France on the other, appeared definitely decided in the former's favour. The Bourbons fore-saw their early return to Paris.

But the indomitable French nation did not dream for a moment of capitulation. Despite growing disorganization at home, despite enervating and destructive party fights, it continued the war. And Bonaparte, in Egypt, made preparations for a triumphal return to Europe.

The Directory, which had so gladly witnessed the departure of the popular general for Pharaoh's land, saw its position, already in November 1798, shaken by internal feuds, and

sent Bonaparte a despatch foreshadowing the outbreak of a second Coalition War. It did not, however, recall him. That despatch only reached Bonaparte in March 1799. He had meanwhile subdued Egypt, and replied to Turkey's declaration of war by undertaking an invasion of Syria. El Arish and Jaffa fell. Bonaparte entrenched himself before St. Jean d'Acre, and his troops stormed the fortress incessantly, but without success ; in the roadstead lay a British squadron under Admiral Sir Sidney Smith. Bonaparte's phantastic mind took pleasure in conjuring-up wondrous visions of conquest. He dreamt of Damascus, of Constantinople, of India, of a new Latin Empire ; pictured himself marching, a reformed Koran in his hand, towards the East at the head of the Mohammedan world. But his admirably lucid reason could not be led astray by such dreams. He knew full well that the means at his disposal did not permit of his embarking on an expedition to Constantinople, nor even to Damascus, to say nothing of a march to India in Alexander's footprints. All such plans were rendered impossible at the outset by England's command of the Mediterranean. But even assuming that Bonaparte had taken seriously these dreams of Oriental splendour created by his visionary and exalted mind, they would in any case have been dissipated by the tardy message from Paris, received by him before St. Jean d'Acre. From the trenches where the besieging Army lay he wrote to Generals Marmont and Dugua, to whom he assigned the command in Egypt during his absence : " In the course of May I shall return to Egypt . . . Akka (St. Jean d'Acre) will fall on the 6th of Floreal . . . and I shall immediately proceed to Cairo."

On May 21st he left for Egypt, but Akka had not fallen, although Bonaparte annihilated a Syrian relieving Army at Mont Thabor, and sacrificed the *élite* of his Grenadiers on the town's ramparts and before the barricades in its streets. Plague broke out among the French troops, and the road bordering the sea, along which they retreated, was hedged-in with corpses and darkened by the smoke of burning villages. A suffocating wind blew from the desert, and far out at sea the sails of British warships could be seen.

Napoleon Bonaparte returned along the road of his destiny. It would be a mistake to ascribe to St. Jean d'Acre a

decisive rôle in Napoleon's career. The legend according to which we are asked to believe that if St. Jean d'Acre had capitulated Napoleon would have overthrown the British Empire, conquered the entire Levant, or even renewed Alexander's world empire, is based on entirely phantastic analogies. From the very beginning Napoleon lacked the means to advance beyond Syria, and after the destruction of his fleet he received no further reinforcements. Great Britain's command of the Mediterranean rendered any French expedition overseas impossible. Not Akka, but Aboukir, decided the fate of Egypt and the East generally, and—albeit in a distant future—of the life-and-death struggle between France and Great Britain, between Napoleon and Europe. The capitulation or non-capitulation of Akka was merely a question of military prestige.

The raising of the siege and the horrors of the retreat through the desert—Napoleon only brought 5,000 men back to Cairo—were speedily outstripped by events. On July 25th, 1799, Napoleon utterly wiped out a Turkish landing Army on the promontory of Aboukir, and on August 21st he embarked for France. He was unaware of the fact that the Directory had already recalled him on May 26th, without being able to send a fleet to fetch him; but he received newspapers with reports of severe defeats suffered by French Armies, and he knew that France needed him and that his hour had struck.

Whilst the vessel carrying Napoleon stole warily away in the shadow of the African coast so as to escape British cruisers' vigilance, the fortunes of war in Europe underwent a change as marked as it was unexpected. The Coalition, which attained the zenith of its triumph at the battle of Novi, now suddenly found itself thrown out of gear. Inner dissensions and the strategy of the *Hofkriegsrat* contributed more than French Armies to giving things this new turn.

After the battle of Novi, Field-Marshal Suvaroff received orders to march off to Switzerland, whereas Archduke Charles was instructed at the same time to return to the German bank of the Rhine. Melas, Suvaroff's second-in-command, remained on the Po in order to disarm the national militia in Piedmont and Tuscany, and complete the conquest of Italy. It was the old story. Austria wished to conquer Italy by herself, and the Vienna Cabinet considered it to be its not

less imperative duty to suppress all democratic movements, even when directed against French invaders. The recall of Archduke Charles to the Upper Rhine was motivated by a desire to prevent French forces moving from Strasbourg and Mayence to Holland, where an Anglo-Russian force contemplated landing.

The net result was to throw the entire grouping of the Allied Armies into confusion. The responsibility for this destruction by the Coalition of its own work must be attributed to the policy of Vienna—a policy which had, not the Rhine, but Austria's profit, in view. Austria hoped to inherit herself the Cisalpine Republic, to extend her boundaries as far as Italy's western shores, and, if possible, to reconquer also the lost Austro-Spanish Netherlands. For this reason Thugut actively supported the plan of an Anglo-Russian expedition. For this reason also Archduke Charles was summoned to the Upper Rhine, and the Allied Armies were re-grouped in such a fashion as to permit of Austria's pursuing her own egotistical aims in Italy and on the Rhine, whilst Russian troops in Switzerland, British and Russian troops in Holland, died for the common cause of all the Allies. The other partners of the Coalition were not blind to the motives inspiring Austria's policy. Suspicion and doubt crept into Chanceries and camps alike. Suvaroff poured the vials of his wrath and irony on Thugut, the "night owl," and on the *Hofkriegsrat*. Tsar Paul, Catherine's successor, who had espoused in his turn the cause of the Monarchical crusade against the Revolution, wrote on July 31st regarding Thugut's policy to his Ambassador Rasumovsky, that he did not desire to put an end to the French Terror merely in order to substitute for it in another country a Government equally anxious to enrich itself at its neighbours' expense.

The Vienna Cabinet's short-sighted policy bore its natural fruits. The re-grouping of the Allied Armies, and the abandonment of the strategic aims set themselves by Suvaroff in Italy and Archduke Charles in Switzerland respectively, proved fatal to the Coalition.

The Anglo-Russian Expeditionary Corps, which landed at Texel, on the Helder, on August 27th, soon found itself in a precarious situation. The Batavian fleet, it is true, refused to open hostilities against the flag of Orange, which flew at

the British Admiral's top-mast, and went over to the Allies ; but General Brune had sufficient French troops at his disposal to keep the Expeditionary Corps in check. Failing to drive the latter into the sea, he withdrew to Bergen, where he awaited the enemy in a strongly fortified position, and repulsed it with heavy loss on September 19th. Twice—on October 2nd and October 6th—the Duke of York renewed the attack, and after finally succeeding in penetrating into Bergen at the point of the bayonet, advanced to Beverwyck, but could not reach Amsterdam. A strip of downs and some dozen villages constituted the only gain. The expedition found itself immobilized amidst sand and swamp, between downs and flooded land, exposed daily to a fierce bombardment, its ranks decimated by disease, and waiting vainly for a rising of the Dutch in the enemy's rear. By October 14th the Duke of York's strength was exhausted. His troops had fought bravely and with dogged tenacity, but were incapable of turning the tide of events. An attempt to retreat failed, and, four days later, York saw himself obliged to sign the Convention of Alkmaar and regain his ships. The estuary of the Rhine remained in French hands.

It was a severe blow for England, and it encouraged the Tsar in his determination to secede from the Coalition. Russian troops did their best in Lombardy, in Holland, in Switzerland ; but all Suvaroff's efforts proved vain.

The Convention of Alkmaar shook the strategic edifice, laboriously raised by the Allies during the spring and summer, to its foundations. Austrian Armies still occupied Piedmont, and an Anglo-Russo-Turkish squadron appeared before the Italian coast to restore the Pope's temporal power ; but all was lost in Switzerland, whilst in France the new Cæsar, Napoleon Bonaparte, already reigned.

In that region which contains the source of the Rhine, Masséna assumed the offensive in order to regain his freedom of movement, and succeeded in cutting off communications between Suvaroff and Archduke Charles. Meditating vengeance, the latter attacked Masséna's left wing, and when this attack failed, withdrew to Germany as ordered. Seizing his opportunity, Masséna flung himself on the Second Russian Army under Korsakoff before Suvaroff had time to arrive, and on September 25th, 1799, thrust it back towards the Rhine.

The entire eastern front of the Allies collapsed, whereupon Masséna turned against Suvaroff, who, having no knowledge of Korsakoff's defeat, started on September 8th from Asti for Bellenz. After fighting his way up the St. Gotthard he reached Muotto on September 29th, where he received news of that catastrophe and of Masséna's approach. By a desperate effort, which cost him one-third of his Army, he crossed the Alps ; then marching downstream through the Rhine valley towards Coire, he joined hands on October 12th with the Austrians at Feldkirch. His hope of an offensive lay buried amidst the snow on Mount St. Gotthard ; and in despatches, every line of which breathed intense fury against the self-seeking and incompetent *Hofkriegsrat*, he reported to his Imperial master in St. Petersburg the terrible vicissitudes of his crossing of the Alps.

On the same day as the Convention of Alkmaar was signed, the Russian Army finally abandoned its last positions in Switzerland and retreated to Lindau, on the Lake of Constance. Four days later Tsar Paul officially deserted the Coalition. With the Russians' withdrawal, the campaign of 1799 came at an end. True, Melas still made a show of fighting in Piedmont and before Genoa, and Szatarry's troops still demonstrated in front of Kehl and Philippsburg ; but neither the conquest of Lombardy nor the successful defence of Southern Germany could counterbalance the loss of Switzerland and Holland, and the withdrawal of the Russians. From source to estuary the Rhine was under French control, and its entire left bank securely in French hands. Switzerland had become a base, dominating simultaneously Southern Germany and Northern Italy, for French attacking operations ; similarly Holland was transformed into a French naval base dominating the flank of the Lower Rhenish region. And yet no sudden turn of fortune's wheel brought all this about. The conquest of Lombardy and the liberation of South Germany merely served to mystify public opinion concerning a strategic evolution, which, although accomplished in silence, proved none the less fatal to the Coalition.

In Paris, Napoleon Bonaparte, carried by the confidence of the whole nation, planned a *coup d'état* with the object of overthrowing the Directory, whose position events had already rudely shaken, and establishing himself as France's

dictator. On September 9th, 1799, Napoleon landed at Fréjus ; his journey to Paris was an uninterrupted triumphal progress. The failure of so many French generals, of Scheerer and Jourdan, Macdonald and Joubert ; incessant party feuds and dire economic distress—all contributed to win him popular affection. The road lay open before him, and he hastened to profit by such advantageous circumstances.

On November 9th, 1799, with his brother Lucien's aid, he deposed the Directory of Five and substituted for it the Triumvirate of Consuls. This *coup d'état*, the crowning-point of the Revolution, the finishing touch to its edifice, kindled new hopes within the nation. Henceforth General Bonaparte became known by his Christian name, and as First Consul initiated that great legislative work which will for ever be associated with his memory. Conscious of his country's precarious condition, and hoping to tear the enemy coalition asunder by means of negotiations, he proposed to Austria and Great Britain that they should accept the Treaty of Campo Formio. It was a clever move. For if they consented, France's defeats would be repaired by a single stroke of the pen ; and if they refused, the responsibility for continuing hostilities rested with them. Great Britain replied that France must be satisfied with her frontiers as fixed in 1791, and restore the Bourbon dynasty as a guarantee of peace. Austria, for her part, insisted on retaining possession of Lombardy.

Great Britain's answer was the more diplomatic of the two. Since England had taken no part in the struggle for the Rhine until after the Treaty of Westphalia constituted the basis of Europe's political system, and since that Treaty never called Louis XIV's policy of "reunion" in question, Pitt naturally did not demand France's renunciation of Alsace, but only her withdrawal from the Middle and Lower Rhine and the evacuation of the Netherlands. Purely British interests dictated Great Britain's demands ; but they nevertheless contained a European programme, and clearly indicated the position to which both England and Europe were imperatively called upon to adhere under penalty of acquiescing in France's claim to hegemony. But it was at the same time a grave error to demand the restoration of the Bourbons. For, on the one hand, their restoration by no means furnished

a guarantee that France would rest satisfied with the proposed delimitation of her frontiers; and, on the other, she could not accept such a condition without repudiating the Revolution.

Even if Louis XVIII recognized the old frontiers in exchange for his ancestral throne, he could not cease desiring France's return to the Rhine. Monarchy and Republic were both in fundamental agreement on this question, since French predominance in Europe has invariably depended on its solution. *Mutatis mutandis*, Germany imperatively requires the Rhine basin in order to *live*—not to *dominate*—and without it she must sink to the level of a mere Franco-Slav glacis.

At the close of the eighteenth century Napoleon grasped the true significance and dimensions of that Rhine problem, which, many hundred years previously, remained incomprehensible to the Roman Cæsar who discovered it. In the meantime it had become the central problem of Europe, in the solution of which Great Britain was all the more vitally interested, since behind the struggle for the Rhine, and already overshadowing it, arose the great question of maritime supremacy. The interpenetration of these two cardinal problems produced, as an inevitable consequence, new enmities and new wars and a vast host of hitherto unforeseen complications, destined to prove a fearful curse for coming generations.

Napoleon's rejection of Pitt's peace conditions on the threshold of 1800 stamped him as the genius ordained by Destiny to become the main instrument of this developmental process, whereby he acted, not merely on the Republic's behalf, but conformably with the undying spirit of the whole French nation, whilst at the same time flattering his own boundless ambition.

Thus the struggle for the Rhine, which had hitherto determined relations between France and Germany, developed at the dawn of the nineteenth century, in conjunction with the struggle for the freedom of the seas, into the main decisive factor of world politics. The gigantic conflict between England and France became, for England, a life-and-death struggle against French Continental hegemony; for France, a not less vital struggle against British maritime supremacy. Austria, on the other hand, continued, blind and deaf to the irresistible

trend of events, to fight, in the shadow of that colossal conflict, for maintenance and aggrandizement of the Habsburgs' dynastic power, one of the chief attributes of which was reckoned to be the Imperial Roman Crown. Prussia remained quiet, pedantically occupied with unimportant administrative and agrarian reforms, much to Baron von Stein's disgust, who complained that Prussia "had ceased to be a military State." Still worse, however, was the fact that Prussia's rulers were no longer capable of thinking politically, and that they had forgotten the Rhine. As for the Tsar, he sulked. Thus war continued between Great Britain and Austria, on the one hand, and France, on the other.

France put three Armies into the field. She sent Moreau to the Rhine, with orders to invade Germany and advance against the Emperor's patrimonial domain. Masséna became Commander-in-Chief in Italy with instructions to defend Genoa, the Riviera di Ponente, and the Alpes Maritimes, so as to give the third Army assembled in the Rhône valley time to debouch from Western Switzerland, cross the Alps, and attack the Austrians in the rear. The plan of campaign revealed Napoleon's master-hand. He based it on the possession of Switzerland, and reserved for himself the command of the third Army in question.

Moreau opened the campaign, crossed the Rhine at Bâle in the direction of Singen, reached Ulm on May 11th, 1800, but could advance no farther. At the same time Masséna was shut up in Genoa by an Austrian Army under General Ott, whilst a British fleet blockaded the harbour. The general situation thus appeared favourable for Austria. The Allies confidently anticipated Genoa's early fall, whereupon the Imperial Field-Marshal Melas intended breaking with 60,000 troops into the Rhône valley. But suddenly, as by a flash of lightning, everything changed. On May 18th news reached Melas that Napoleon's Army was advancing against Mount St. Bernard and threatening his rear. Albeit at first sceptical, Melas moved with 11,000 troops to Turin, summoning Ott from Genoa to his assistance. Not Turin, however, but Milan, the enemy base of operations, which he entered on June 1st, and where he immediately afterwards proclaimed anew the Cisalpine Republic, constituted the goal of Napoleon's strategy.

But on June 4th Genoa fell. Five days later Napoleon attacked and repulsed General Ott's corps at Casteggio, and on June 14th, advancing from East to West, came upon the Austrian main force under Melas, advancing from West to East, on the river Fontanone. At nine o'clock in the morning the advance-guards of either Army open the historic battle of Marengo, so named after the village forming Napoleon's centre. At eleven o'clock the French retreat from the Fontanone, at two o'clock they are driven from Marengo, at five o'clock they appear hopelessly defeated—nay, well-nigh routed—at San Giuliano. Old Marshal Melas rides back to his headquarters at Alessandria, to despatch from thither a courier with victory's glad tidings to Vienna. Inscrutable Fate, however, who mocks men's vain efforts, had decided to prove once more the eternal truth of the proverb about the slip 'twixt cup and lip. Lo and behold! In the nick of time reinforcements under the veteran General Desaix suddenly arrive. And the situation, already fast growing desperate for France's Army, is saved. Fired by Napoleon's example, the retreating troops are brought to a standstill, and, making *volte face*, fling themselves with the new-comers on their pursuers. Their *élan* is irresistible. Within a single hour they completely turn the tide of battle. The pursuers become in their turn the pursued and flee panic-stricken in headlong flight on Marengo, whence they dislodged their adversaries only a few hours previously. They stop neither there nor on the Fontanone, but rush in wild haste back towards Alessandria, where Melas, thunderstruck by this *coup de théâtre*, suddenly sees himself enveloped from all sides, cut off from his communications, and forced to retreat on the Alps. General Zach, to whom he entrusted the task of pursuing the French, is now a prisoner in their hands. Desaix has fallen; but to his timely arrival Napoleon has been able to transform imminent defeat into a brilliant victory.

An Austrian officer bearing a flag of truce appears at French headquarters on behalf of Melas to request an honourable retreat, in return for ceding Italy as far as the Mincio to the victor. The campaign is finished and Napoleon's name destined to be carried on the wings of fame to all corners of the globe.

The day of Marengo cost the Coalition the fruit of a year's

labours. Napoleon had conquered the Rhine in Lombardy's plains.

Vainly did Austria endeavour, after unsuccessful negotiations in view of an armistice, to renew hostilities, and to place new divisions in the field on the Mincio, in South Tyrol, and on the Inn. Marengo proved too much for what still remained of her staying power. She had definitely lost the war.

Ever since the triumph of Marengo Napoleon continued negotiations with the Vienna Cabinet with a view to inducing it to conclude a separate peace. In the course of these negotiations he gained ground step by step. When, in October 1800, Thugut resigned, to be succeeded by the pacifistic Count Cobenzl, Napoleon resorted to strong diplomatic pressure. On January 2nd, 1801, he informed the French Legislature that Austria must negotiate without England. France demanded the frontiers of the Rhine and Adige, which the Emperor would have to concede without previous consultation with the Imperial Estates. Should his Majesty decline to do so, peace would be signed under the dictation of French Armies in Prague, Vienna, and Venice.

The Vienna Cabinet could not withstand the pressure exerted by this announcement. Napoleon had meanwhile effected a *rapprochement* with Russia, embittered alike by the experiences made in 1799 and by Great Britain's brutal methods of maritime warfare. Since, on the other hand, Great Britain could lend no military support to Austria, who had to content herself with subsidies, the Emperor Francis saw himself obliged *nolens volens* to accept Napoleon's terms, and peace was signed at Lunéville on February 9th, 1801.

The Treaty of Lunéville was based on that of Campo Formio, but the former contained no secret clauses. It proclaimed, on the contrary, *urbi et orbi* the cession of the left bank of the Rhine, the valley of which became Germany's western frontier. The fact that, in Italy, Austria had to content herself provisionally with the Adige as frontier, in return for a promise to cede her Venice, Istria, and Dalmatia, did not at that time particularly concern Germany. But that the latter's renunciation of the entire left bank of the Rhine should be solemnly guaranteed before the whole world, whilst Holland and Switzerland became simultaneously enclaves in France's sphere of influence, was a matter which vitally affected her funda-

mental interests. And yet, curiously enough, the German people, accustomed to lead throughout the centuries an unnatural existence, split-up into some 300 territories, without a State in the word's true meaning, and bereft of political instinct and national aims, did not even feel the amputation. The German remained blissfully unaware that the loss of the Rhine's left bank involved losing the entire river basin, and, with it, forfeiting his country's independence—that Germany's strength was thereby sapped at its base.

But yet things more singular still happened at Lunéville. Article VII of the Treaty provided that all those hereditary German princes who were deprived of their possessions on the left bank of the Rhine should receive compensation within the Empire itself. Truly an extraordinary political paradox ! The Empire, on the one hand, lost the left bank, it lost Brussels and Liége, Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne, Coblenz and Treves, Mayence and Speyer and Worms, and all the land lying between these towns ; the deposed dynasties, on the other, lost nothing, and recovered at the Empire's expense an equivalent for what they yielded-up to France. Thus the German nation became a mere object of political exploitation.

France now discarded all attempts at disguise or concealment. Without any pretext of appealing to ideals of national liberty and self-determination, she claimed the Rhineland, and, by the voice of her First Consul, proclaimed to its inhabitants : " Your country will no longer be a battlefield for conflicting interests, but will henceforth be protected by interests common to thirty million French citizens. It will no longer be at the mercy of a number of petty tyrants, too weak to defend themselves, but strong enough to oppress you ; henceforth it will enjoy the protection of a Power capable of ensuring order and peace within its territory." How true were these words—and yet what a total absence of idealism did they connote, how entirely materialistic was the train of thought which inspired them ! They ignored the right of national self-determination ; ignored the fact that a foreign conqueror spoke here in a foreign tongue to human beings who since 1,500 years had been settled on the Rhine—who, it is true, possessed certain ancient foundations of civilization in common with the conqueror, but who on these foundations had erected in the course of centuries,

thanks to the creative efforts of innumerable German generations, their own purely German edifice, every stone of which bore eloquent testimony to German labour and German thought, German energy and German genius. True, many factors contributed to make of the Holy Roman Empire a veritable monstrosity—especially the obstinate adherence to an obsolete *Kleinstaaterei*, a singular aversion for the pursuit of national aims, and a total neglect of political training. But who was more responsible for this development than France herself, the guarantor of the Peace of Westphalia? And however great the cleavages among the German people, the decrepitude and decomposition of the motley assortment of States forming the Holy Roman Empire, might be—this did not justify France's burrowing in Germany's entrails.

The French Republic had not awaited the conclusion of the Peace of Lunéville in order to take over the administration of the Rhineland. When General Hoche resided in Coblenz in the summer of 1797, he summoned a meeting of confidential agents to make arrangements for proclaiming a Rhenish Republic. The separatists appeared wearing green ribbons. Hoche gave them in addition the corresponding colours of the French tricolour flag, and encouraged them to proclaim the Rhenish Republic under the auspices of the new green, white, and red tricolour. But the Directory intervened, and gave instructions that the country should be annexed purely and simply. At Hoche's funeral in September 1797 both tricolours were placed on his coffin; but the French Republic absorbed her Rhenish sister before the latter was ever born. On March 30th, 1798, a decree was issued suppressing German as an official language. On September 22nd, 1802, the incorporation of the Rhineland with the French State was complete. The French Republic renounced the doctrine which itself took over from America, and to which the French Revolution imparted new life—the doctrine that nations themselves, and not any autocratic powers, are alone entitled to constitute States, and that frontiers should not be delimited arbitrarily and by force, but determined by common consent conformably with the principle of equal rights for all. When Napoleon caused himself to be elected First Consul for life, the conquest of the Rhine no longer formed his aim; for that aim he had already

accomplished. And he carried out his plans in his capacity as achiever of traditional and immutable French policy, as personification of the French nation's insatiable will to power.

If France remained mistress of the Rhine, she became *ipso facto* arbitrator between the myriad of little German States and mistress of Europe. But in 1802, after Austria's abandonment of the Rhine, Prussia's renunciation of political activity, and Tsar Paul's change of front, who could possibly bar the way to her further progress? Great Britain, who by defending on the Rhine the European balance of power defended simultaneously her own position as a World Power, could not bear the burden alone. Without a single "Continental sword" to assist her, she could not hope to bring the war to a victorious end. Under these circumstances it was natural that the desire for peace should outweigh the necessity for continuing hostilities. When Pitt the Younger, realizing this situation, and in obedience to considerations of home policy, resigned on March 14th, 1801, and handed the seals of office to his *locum tenens* Addington—when this happened, the conclusion of peace between France and England was merely a question of time. Events were hastened by the Tsar's assassination and by the capitulation of the French Orient Army. The Preliminary Peace signed in London on October 1st, 1801, was completed by the Treaty of Amiens on March 26th, 1802. The latter confirmed the cession to France of the left bank of the Rhine; of her oversea conquests Great Britain only retained Trinidad and Ceylon, and she undertook to evacuate Malta.

The Peace of Amiens guaranteed France the mastery of Europe's coasts from the Zuyder Zee to the Gulf of Taranto; this effectively shut off Great Britain from Western Europe. It likewise guaranteed her possession of the Rhine, thereby enabling Napoleon to dominate the Continent. The struggle for the Rhine, which Germany, owing to internal dissensions, proved incapable of waging successfully, appeared to have been abandoned by Great Britain and definitely won by France.

When the Treaty was laid before the British Parliament, the majority applauded, but voices from the Opposition benches were to be heard exclaiming: "We have confirmed

the conquest of Italy and the subjugation of Europe by France." It was as though the ghost of William Pitt the Elder suddenly strode through the House.

If Great Britain—as seemed clear in the Treaty of Amiens—definitely renounced fighting out the struggle for the Rhine to its bitter end, then not Lille, where a similar peace had been rejected with indignation in 1796,¹ but Amiens, would have become "the grave of Britain's greatness."

Both England and France, however, saw in this Treaty a mere truce in the gigantic conflict between the two century-old rivals. France being now in possession of the left bank of the Rhine, the struggle for that river, for the first time in history, was henceforth completely overshadowed by the still greater struggle for world domination. Yet this latter struggle based on the former one. The Rhine furnished France with the necessary strength to wrestle with John Bull for the *arbitrium mundi*. Germany, who owned the Rhine and its adjacent territory in days of yore, lay exhausted and bleeding from a thousand wounds. A united German nation did not exist. But precisely for this reason could peace and prosperity not return to Europe. Nor would they do so until, in the renewed struggle between Napoleon and John Bull, the Germans reawakened to a consciousness of their national necessities and reconquered their common patrimony by their own efforts.

The struggle for the Rhine reverted to its starting-point—to where it originally began in Arminius the Cheruscan's days.

¹ See pp. 285, 286

CHAPTER XII

NAPOLEON I AND FRANCE'S PREDOMINANCE IN THE RHINE BASIN

The Rhine as barrier between two worlds—The Rhineland as French base of operations—Napoleon's colonial plans and the Peace of Amiens—Rupture of the Peace of Amiens—Occupation of Hanover—Prussia's policy of neutrality—Napoleon's armaments and England's search for allies—Execution of the Duc d'Enghien—Napoleon's coronation—William Pitt's return to power—Napoleon in Boulogne and Aix-la-Chapelle—The new Rhenish Confederation—The third Coalition War begins—The Rhine and Napoleon's strategic principles—From Boulogne to the Upper Rhine—General Mack's capitulation—Prussia's weakness—Austerlitz—The Schönbrunn alliance—Peace of Pressburg—Trafalgar—Death of Pitt—Continental Blockade and Universal Monarchy—Prussia declares war—Napoleon's plan of operations—Jena—Prussia's collapse—Transformations—The Berlin Decree—Eylau and Friedland—Peace of Tilsit—France's conquest of the Elbe frontier—Congress of Erfurt—*Il faut dépayser l'esprit allemand*—French rule in Germany—The French nation and the Empire—Great Britain and the freedom of Europe—Orders in Council and Napoleonic decrees—Joseph Bonaparte in Spain—Spain's uprising—Austria's uprising in 1809—Wagram—Peace of Schönbrunn—Andreas Hofer and the Tyrol—The frontiers of the Empire and its strategic foundations—France and Russia—Dreams of Eastern conquest—The Rhine forgotten—Great Britain's world power and Napoleon's universal monarchy—The Russian campaign—Borodino—Burning of Moscow—Crossing of the Beresina—Wellington in Spain—Convention of Tauroggen—Prussia's call to arms—Napoleon's campaign on the Elbe—The fourth Coalition—Napoleon's new strategy—Battles of Grossbeeren, the Katzbach, Kulm, and Dennewitz—The battle of Leipzig—Metternich's manifesto—Crossing of the Rhine—Napoleon's winter campaign in France—Negotiations in Châtillon—“German aggression”—Pact of Chaumont—Napoleon's abdication—First Peace of Paris—Congress of Vienna—Napoleon's return from Elba—Ligny and Quatre-Bras—Waterloo—Second Peace of Paris—The Holy Alliance—The struggle for world supremacy—The end of the Napoleonic epos and the struggle for the Rhine—Dawn of the industrial era.

FOR two years Europe rested from its wars—two brief years of respite from slaughter and turmoil were granted it, during which the Rhine served as barrier separating two hostile worlds. Napoleon's creative genius lifted France from out of the chaos begotten of revolution and internal discord, and placed her on a solid new fundament; and the German

Rhineland, albeit severed from its natural connections, shared both blessings and drawbacks of the new order of things, receiving from France its civil legislation and giving France its sons in return. The Rhinelanders enjoyed the benefits derived from the growing trade of a country administered conformably with mercantile principles; they listened to their church bells hailing the restoration of Catholicism; but they saw, on the other hand, their mother-tongue prohibited, their newspapers suppressed, their former autonomy progressively reduced by the French State. There was no longer any talk of liberty, but only of equality for all before the law—a law which had its source, not in popular sovereignty, but in the iron will of an autocrat.

German princes hastened to Paris to push forward their respective claims for compensation, within the Reich, for territorial losses suffered by them on the Rhine's left bank, as provided by the Treaty of Lunéville.¹ French agents were copiously bribed. The era of Germany's most abject self-abasement dawned, during which France settled and resettled conditions there exactly as she wished, whilst securely establishing herself both at the Rhine's estuary and in the Alpine passes, so as to be prepared for all emergencies. Holland became a base of operations against Hanover and Great Britain, Switzerland a similar base against Austria and Italy.

Henceforth France fought her battles in the heart of Germany. Being in possession of the entire Dutch coast, she could utilize her own northern coast as a vast sally-port against England. Should Napoleon succeed in reconstructing France's navy and driving the British squadrons from the Channel for twenty-four hours, he might reasonably hope to enable his troops to cross, on a fleet of suitable craft, that narrow strip of sea, and thus repeat William of Normandy's momentous exploit.

In 1802 France dominated the whole of Western Europe, thereby rendering the artificially construed theory of "natural frontiers" superfluous. The space contained between the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees had already become too exiguous to satisfy her craving for expansion. If the Peace of Lunéville, by unduly whetting her appetite, incited her to

¹ See p. 305.

cast off all restraint, that of Amiens proved insufficient to prevent Helvetia and Batavia, Iberia and Italy, remaining so many happy hunting-gounds for French ambition. This state of affairs, inimical to Europe's permanent interests, was due to the co-operation of a number of different factors: Germany's impotence, Prussia's lethargy, Russia's aloofness, Austria's defeat, Great Britain's fatigue. France felt herself already strong enough to start rebuilding her colonial empire, and despatched an expedition to the West Indies to recover the lost slave colonies there and teach the negroes that the Rights of Man authorized no country to render itself independent of France.

In order to conquer the world, Napoleon needed sufficient time for the accomplishment of two things: the merging into each other of the heterogeneous parts of France's European possessions, and the reconstruction of France's navy. Events denied him the achievement of either aim. The Peace of Amiens came to an end long before his schemes could ripen to maturity.

That this should occur lay in the nature of things—above all, in the nature of Anglo-French relations as shaped by France's predominance on the Rhine and by Napoleon's reversion to a "forward" colonial policy. Disputes speedily arose owing to Great Britain's refusal to evacuate Egypt and Malta; alike in Batavia, in Helvetia, in the West Indies, the two adversaries confronted each other with unveiled hostility. And all these complications were begotten of the Treaty of Amiens, since that document, far from sealing European peace, rendered it impossible, by destroying the equilibrium on which it necessarily rests. At the very moment of the Treaty's conclusion, both France and England knew full well that a renewal of hostilities was but a question of time, and of a very short time—that the so-called peace was only a breathing space, a brief lull in the storm. Their respective positions, however, differed. France needed more time to recuperate than England. For this reason Napoleon did not intentionally bring about a breach; and if he found himself forced to take a decision sooner than advisable in the interest of the realization of his genially conceived schemes of reconstruction and reparation, this was certainly due to his temperament rather than to his intelligence. Great

Britain, on the other hand, far from having any motive for postponing the inevitable conflict, had every interest in renewing it before being placed, alike from a diplomatic and a military point of view, on the defensive.

Yet if Napoleon was less free to choose than England, and if the outbreak of war found him still in the midst of a gigantic task of national reconstruction, he had none the less, when events began to take a critical turn, laid the foundations on which he anticipated definitely establishing his world power. Having become arbitrator of Switzerland's destinies, he gave that country a new constitution, and surrounded France by a network of vassal States from the source of the Rhine to its estuary. On February 25th, 1803, he divided up afresh the Holy Roman Empire, henceforth confined to this river's right bank, the ecclesiastical principalities being secularized, and forty-two out of forty-eight Free Imperial towns which had withstood the storms of centuries deprived of their charters. It goes without saying that Napoleon carried out the partition in such a way as to ensure a *maximum* of safeguards for France's spheres of interest. Prussia was awarded the Bishoprics of Hildesheim, Paderborn, and Münster, the Free Imperial towns of Mulhouse, Goslar, and Nordhausen, and the former possessions of the Electorate of Mayence in Thuringia ; and she thus exchanged 46 square miles of territory on the left bank of the Rhine for 240 square miles of new territory on the right bank. As for Bavaria, despite the loss of the Rhenish Palatinate, she found her domains increased by 100 square miles, thanks to the incorporation of certain ecclesiastical principalities and a number of small Imperial Towns. Baden, Würtemberg, the two Electorates of Hesse and Nassau, were likewise accorded favourable treatment. If Margrave Charles Frederic of Baden came off best of all, this was due to strategic considerations, Napoleon being anxious to bind Baden as closely as possible to France, so as to extend the Badenese glacis on the Rhine, and obtain control of all valleys and passes. Napoleon compensated Austria by the cession of Venice and Istria ; she did not, however, renounce her dreams of aggrandizement at Bavaria's expense, thereby widening the breach which Austrian expansionist aims in the Inn valley and the Alpine region had for centuries past caused between Habsburgs and Wittelsbachs.

By the time the Imperial Reichstag accepted these conditions, relations between France and Great Britain became strained to breaking-point. On March 13th, 1803, scarcely a year after the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, the definite rupture—more welcome, for reasons already stated, to Great Britain than to France—was heralded, when Napoleon placed Great Britain before the alternative: evacuation of Malta or war. If England accepted this demand, her ships must be banished from the Eastern Mediterranean, which would henceforth be dominated by Italy, herself completely under French influence. On April 4th Great Britain replied *du tac au tac* by not only refusing the First Consul's demand, but by putting forward a counter-demand for the evacuation by France of Switzerland and Holland. British interests were thus clearly pitted against French interests—the claims of either country to world power being exposed without any attempt to cloak their real nature. Napoleon saw himself obliged to abandon his colonial policy, so as to avoid offering his enemy a greater number of points of attack than strictly indispensable. He sold Louisiana—which Spain had restored to France in 1800—to the United States, and sought simultaneously to involve Russia in the conflict, by proposing to Tsar Alexander I, Paul's successor, that Russia should occupy Malta in the capacity of trustee. Thus he set up a rival to Great Britain in America and endeavoured to secure a new ally for France in Europe. But this far-sighted policy bore no immediate fruit. America did not budge, and Alexander declined Napoleon's tempting invitation.

On May 16th a Royal message to the British Parliament announced the rupture with France. The Peace of Amiens, which Vorontsoff, Alexander's Ambassador in London, described as “simple trêve,” vanished like a mere soap bubble. The renewal of the war aroused enthusiasm in France, created excitement in England, and caused general dismay in Europe. During the first years of its duration it was not characterized by any campaign on a large scale; but British cruisers gave chase to all enemy merchantmen, and British battleships compelled France's squadrons to remain at anchor in their roadsteads. Since Napoleon could not seize his adversary by the throat, he followed Louis XIV's example by flinging himself on Hanover without any pre-

liminary declaration of war. By a rapid and vigorous *coup de main* he placed himself in possession of that Electorate.

The Hanoverian Government appealed in vain for assistance to King George III of England, Elector of Hanover, and King Frederic William II of Prussia. The former only offered to send ships to enable the Hanoverian Army to escape to England. The King of Prussia did still less, and missed the last opportunity of rescuing what still survived of Frederic the Great's heritage from the wreckage accumulated by Frederic William II's own mistaken policy. He pusillanimously refused Hanover's request, and did not move a finger when the French forced the gate of the Weser and took up their positions close to Prussia's frontier, in that ancient Imperial territory protected by the Peace of Lunéville.

By this attitude of Prussia's, her policy of neutrality lost any last shred of justification it might formerly have claimed, and the Prussian State ceased to be regarded by Napoleon as a serious factor. Had Prussia marched into Hanover in the spring of 1803 in order to occupy the Electorate, as she was entitled to do under the terms of the Treaty of Bâle—her policy of neutrality would have been deprived of all semblance of being a mere cloak for satiated pusillanimity, and would have assumed, on the contrary, an aspect of greatness susceptible of restoring to the country its power of action. Who can tell whether Napoleon would have risked replying by a declaration of war to the occupation of Hanover by Prussian troops, thereby supplying Great Britain with that "Continental sword" she so badly needed? But nothing happened; Prussia turned aside and let things take their course. The Hanoverian Government did not dare offer any resistance, and on June 3rd accepted the conditions laid down by General Mortier, the French Commander. The Hanoverian Army withdrew across the Elbe, and handed over the fortress of Hamelin to the French.

Hanover undertook to pay the costs of the French Army of Occupation, which amounted to seventeen million francs at the end of the first six months. The Electorate being then at the end of its resources, France applied to the adjacent territories for loans to the Hanoverian Treasury. Since the only alternative was to submit to being occupied in their turn by French Armies, the territories in question--namely,

the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, and the Electorate of Hesse—were compelled *nolens volens* to accept. Hamburg was mulcted in a forced contribution of three million francs; Lübeck, Bremen, and Hesse together furnished 1,335,000 thalers. Territorial occupation ended in enslavement of the inhabitants. But no help was forthcoming for Hanover in her distress. Prussia did not venture beyond a feeble protest, which, naturally enough, met with no success. Hanover, Lauenburg, and Cuxhaven remained in French hands. An impotent Reichstag still sat in Regensburg, unable to do more than entertain a vague hope of Russian intervention.

Meanwhile Napoleon proceeded to complete his preparations against Great Britain. Numerous camps were formed on the north coast of France, thousands of flat-bottomed boats filled the ports, and the plan of an invasion of England formerly drawn-up by the Directory fast ripened to maturity. Everything depended on the French fleet being able to assure the transport of the French Army across the Channel; should it succeed in so doing, Great Britain must be lost.

Napoleon was neither a victim of an illusion, nor did he desire to create a mere diversion, when he concentrated the whole strength of France on, and affected a substantial part of her resources to, the organization of this vast enterprise. He fanned all the passions of the French nation into a single gigantic flame of hatred against England, and directed the entire weight of a policy of truly titanic greatness towards crushing an adversary in whom he rightly recognized the mainstay of European opposition to France's hegemony. He summoned France to arms against "perfidious Albion, tyrant of the seas"; whilst Great Britain, for her part, searched for allies in her alleged struggle "for Europe's liberty."

In this race between armaments and the search for "Continental swords," the former reached the goal first. The European Powers did not want war. And even an attempt to revive the Royalists' guerrilla operations in Brittany failed. Napoleon took advantage of a Royalist attempt on his life to get rid of his chief political opponents and rivals. On March 15th, 1804, he stretched out his hand across the Rhine, which France herself had recognized as her frontier, seized the Duc d'Enghien in Ettenheim, the latter's place of refuge in Baden, and caused

him to be dragged before a court-martial on a charge of conspiring against the Republic. Already on March 20th the fatal volleys were fired at Vincennes. Five days later the President of the *Corps Législatif*, addressing Napoleon, said : " France has only one master—yourself ; and only one enemy —England."

On May 18th, 1804, the First Consul assumed the title of Emperor of the French, thereby invoking Charlemagne's spectre. Julius Cæsar and Carolus Magnus, *Imperium Romanum* and Carolingian world empire, were resuscitated. The whole system of territorially differentiated European States, the national right of self-determination, the liberty of nations—all these notions disappeared to make room for that of an autocrat's universal domination. It was a conception worthy of a Titan's genius.

Napoleon's coronation marks the completion of his conquest of France. But it necessarily produced a different effect in other countries. The European Powers, indifferent to Hanover's fate, were roused alike by the execution of the Duc d'Enghien and by the First Consul's accession to the Imperial throne. Recognizing that the nebulous dignity of a Holy Roman Emperor must definitely evaporate in the light shed by the new Majesty of France, Francis of Habsburg likewise assumed a hereditary title : that of Emperor of Austria. But the Vienna Cabinet nevertheless shrank from a declaration of war. Meanwhile Tsar Alexander began to draw nearer to Great Britain. As for Prussia, she still adhered obstinately to her fruitless policy of neutrality.

Great Britain replied to the First Consul's elevation by calling on William Pitt to take charge of the helm of State. In August Napoleon held a great review of his forces assembled on the north coast, on which occasion he bestowed the Roman eagle on the various regiments as their field badge, promoted a number of generals to the rank of Marshal, and founded the Legion of Honour. He then proceeded to Aix-la-Chapelle, to show himself in all his Imperial pomp at Charlemagne's grave. He was enthusiastically received by a population profoundly impressed by the almost fabulous romance attending his apparition. A fundamental trait of the German character is an instinctive need of leadership and hero-worship ; and this craving, so long doomed to remain

unsatisfied, was the secret of the fascination exercised by Napoleon's magic name on a wholly unpolitical people. In September great festivities, to which Napoleon invited all the South German princes, took place at Mayence, Frederic Barbarossa's historic residence. The outlines of a new Rhenish Confederation appeared on the horizon.

On December 2nd, 1804, in the venerable cathedral of Notre Dame, Pope Pius VII solemnly consecrated the new Napoleonic Empire, and the following day England recruited her first Continental ally in the person of Gustave IV of Sweden. In the spring of 1805 Napoleon was crowned at Milan with the iron crown of the Langobards, the Ligurian Republic united to France, and Napoleon's stepson, Eugène Beauharnais, appointed Viceroy of Italy. Hereupon Russia and Austria openly joined the anti-French coalition, to which they had already secretly bound themselves in November 1804.

The third Coalition War commenced.

When opening hostilities, the Coalition entertained vast political schemes. It aimed at confining France within her old frontiers, erecting solid barriers against her lust of expansion, and creating a general system of European international law. Its strategic plans were considerably less far-reaching, and its armaments deficient. Prussia and Austria, it is true, agreed to put 350,000 men into the field, and England undertook to finance operations without stint or limit. But the proposed numerical strength of the Armies existed solely on paper, whilst mobilization was carried out according to antiquated methods. Forgetting the lessons of Mantua and Marengo, the *Hofkriegsrat* committed the mistake of scattering the Allied forces. The new war was waged far from the Rhine, which, from a geographico-military point of view, lay much more deeply embedded in the French sphere of power than existing political conditions seemed to indicate. The French glacis lay between the Iller and the Inn, at the source of the Main, and on the Elbe.

The historic antagonism between Austria and Bavaria strengthened France's strategic position in 1805 no less than it had done, a century previously, in 1701. Inveterately suspicious of Austria's designs on Bavarian territory, Elector Max Joseph concluded an alliance with France on August 24th, 1805, thus bringing his country once again into the French camp.

Badenese and Swabian contingents likewise fought under the tricolour flag.

The Austrians could nevertheless hope to reach the Bavarian Danube and gain possession of the Black Forest Passes before Napoleon had time to do so, since the French main force was not quartered on the Rhine, but on the shores of the Channel, and the Russian advance had already begun. But rapidity of decision and energetic action did not characterize a nation conservative even in its errors. Thus 90,000 Austrian troops and as many Russians were selected for the campaign in South Germany, but simultaneously 140,000 men told-off for the reconquest of Lombardy; further expeditions of Swedish, Russian, and British regiments were planned on the North German, Dutch, and Neapolitan coasts.

The outbreak of war had the effect of warding-off any immediate danger for England resulting from a possible invasion. The diversion was not unwelcome to Napoleon, who still lacked all possibility of action in this direction, since the French fleet did not succeed in gaining command of the Channel, thus assuring the passage across it of an invading Army. From month to month and day to day Napoleon vainly awaited his fleet's arrival; obeying the Emperor's imperative instructions, it proceeded from Toulon to Ferrol, from Ferrol to the West Indies and back; and finally Admiral Villeneuve was peremptorily ordered to make for the Channel. But Villeneuve found his way everywhere blocked by British ships, which compelled him to change his course. On hearing, on August 25th, that Villeneuve had sailed from Ferrol to Cadiz instead of steering for the North, Napoleon abandoned the enterprise, on which so much money and energy had been spent since two years, as hopeless. Hence Napoleon was obliged to march against Austria and Russia instead of crossing the Channel and seizing his chief adversary by the throat.

Always prompt to decide, Napoleon instantly cast the plan aside, wheeled the great Army which he had armed, trained, and drawn-up according to new principles, round towards the East, ordered his corps stationed in Hanover and Holland to march to the Main, and appeared himself four weeks later with 143,000 men on the Upper Rhine.

Meanwhile the Austrians crossed the Inn, drove a Bavarian

corps under General Wrede on Bamberg, and advanced under General Mack over the Lech towards the Iller. At the head of his 35,000 men, Mack marched right into the lion's jaws. On October 12th Bernadotte, Marmont, and Wrede already stood on his right flank between Würzburg and Ansbach, whilst the main enemy force under Napoleon was drawn-up immediately in front of him along the line Stuttgart-Neckarelz. When Napoleon heard that, instead of seeking to avoid imminent envelopment, the Austrians had halted near Ulm, he at once proceeded to attack them in the flank and rear. In a three days' battle (October 10th, 11th, and 14th) Mack was thrown back on Ulm, and on October 15th shut up in that fortress. On October 17th Mack capitulated with 23,000 men; small remnants under Archduke Ferdinand and Jellachich succeeded in cutting their way through the besiegers and escaping. The patrimonial domains of the Habsburgs lay open before Napoleon.

At the very moment when Mack capitulated, the Russians under Kutuzoff reached the Inn. The Austrian General Meerveldt collected the remnants which had made good their escape from Ulm; but the total allied strength attained barely 50,000 men. Napoleon, advancing by forced marches, reached Vienna on November 3rd, and on November 23rd the Allies took up positions near Olmütz, whereupon Napoleon set off in the direction of Brünn, determined to bring about, if possible, a decisive battle.

Frederic William III of Prussia, incensed by the violation of the neutral Prussian territory of Ansbach, pulled himself together sufficiently to cause Hanover, after its evacuation by the French, to be occupied by Prussian troops; and he further despatched his Minister Haugwitz to Napoleon's headquarters, to convey a threat of Prussia's secession to the Coalition. Napoleon could not view this prospect with indifference at the present moment, his hands being tied in Austria, where events were swiftly ripening to maturity. He therefore put Frederic William off by means of dilatory tactics. For he knew that Archduke Charles, retreating from the Adige to the Danube, was collecting all forces scattered through the Alpine provinces, and that every passing day saw a numerical increase of the Allied Armies. Napoleon himself simply panted for the inevitable clash of arms. But

the Allies also grew impatient. Tsar Alexander and the Emperor Francis were both anxious to fight—especially the former, convinced of the superiority of the Russians. Alexander had just arrived from Potsdam—from that historic meeting with Frederic William III and Queen Louise at Frederic the Great's tomb, during which Alexander swore amidst tears eternal friendship to Prussia's King. The latter, however, could not be induced to take up arms at once against France, and would only promise a sort of semi-alliance, so that Alexander decided to risk striking a blow without him. Meanwhile secret negotiations proceeded between Napoleon and Vienna, whilst on the other hand Napoleon sought to detach Alexander from the Austrian alliance. The tension rapidly became unbearable.

On November 27th the Allies advanced unexpectedly against Brünn, but wasted valuable time by manoeuvring with a view to cutting off Napoleon's communications with the Danube. On December 1st the French Emperor, with 75,000 troops—a number approximately equal to that of the Allied Army—encountered his adversaries at Austerlitz. The result of the historic battle that ensued is known and need not be recounted. It suffices to say that fully one-third of the Austro-Russian Army perished; that the rest fled panic-stricken from the scene of carnage, leaving practically the entire artillery in enemy hands; and that, by one single decisive stroke, France won, not merely a battle, not merely a campaign, but the whole war.

Tsar Alexander, on the eve of Austerlitz so full of enthusiasm, was on its morrow so thoroughly discomfited that he prevailed on his cooler Austrian colleague to open immediate pourparlers with the victor. His own Russian troops, conformably with Napoleon's desire, withdrew to Galicia, whilst he himself released Frederic William of Prussia from the obligations incurred at Potsdam. Prussia, now less willing than ever to risk hostilities, *nolens volens* allied herself with Napoleon by the Treaty of Schönbrunn. Austria, vanquished and abandoned to her fate, accepted the conditions dictated by Napoleon. Prussia consented to cede her territories on the right bank of the Rhine to France, Ansbach to Bavaria, the principality of Neuchâtel to Helvetia, receiving in exchange the questionable gift of the Electorate

of Hanover. By the Treaty of Pressburg, Austria ceded Venetia, Istria, and Dalmatia to the Kingdom of Italy, and the Tyrol, including Trent, to Bavaria.

Without concluding peace, Tsar Alexander disappeared behind the Polish border.

England contemplated the sorry spectacle of the third Coalition's inglorious collapse. Her own efforts to effect a landing in Holland had failed; Naples was lost; the whole of Italy and the Adriatic were in Napoleon's hands; and nearly all England's communications with the Continent were cut off.

But one asset still remained to England—namely, the command of the seas. During the interval which elapsed between the catastrophes of Ulm and Austerlitz, on October 21st, Nelson succeeded in annihilating the Franco-Spanish fleet under Villeneuve off Cape Trafalgar. But such was the effect produced by Austerlitz that even William Pitt underestimated the importance of a victory which, by destroying France's navy, ensured definitely for Great Britain the mastery over the ocean's waves, and thereby guaranteed her freedom of action in all parts of the globe. When the dying statesman pronounced the memorable words "roll up that map," he saw nothing but deepest gloom ahead. But the ship of the British State, albeit well-nigh engulfed by the stormy seas which tossed it to and fro, none the less emerged safe and sound from the devastating hurricane. True, the consequences of Aboukir and Trafalgar were as yet remote, and could be with difficulty perceived even by a prophet's eye; whereas Marengo and Austerlitz dominated the present.

Great Britain purchased her freedom of action overseas at the expense of her liberty of action in Europe. The struggle between Great Britain and France became one between the "tyrant of the seas" and the "tyrant of the Continent." For Napoleon now applied himself with ruthless logic to the task of excluding Great Britain from every European market, with the object of starving her into submission.

When, in the sixteenth century, France emerged from her natural geographical frontiers and commenced to penetrate deeper and deeper into territories inhabited by German-

speaking populations, until she finally acquired the mastery over the Rhine from source to estuary, she laid the foundations of an irreconcilable antagonism between French hegemony and European liberty. This policy of expansion now found its logical completion in the Continental blockade, and simultaneously in Napoleon's striving for universal domination. Napoleon himself, it is true, saw matters in a different light, and declared that Great Britain forced him to conquer Europe. He was right, in so far as his conquests were undeniably dictated by strategic necessities; but he omitted to add that these necessities themselves arose owing to the fact that France declined to accept any peace confining her within the limits of her frontiers as they existed in 1792. And we may add that, even had France not been under the sway of Napoleon's sceptre, she would likewise have refused to admit any such limitations so long as she was in a position to continue the fight.

When, in 1806, the Rhenish Confederation was founded and Francis of Habsburg renounced the nebulous dignity of Holy Roman Emperor, Napoleon's subjects already spoke three different languages, and his empire had long since ceased to be a French national institution. The final disappearance of the Holy Roman Empire, after a career of one thousand years, took no one by surprise, since it had been for a considerable time past little more than an archaic survival. Its death agony began as far back as 1648, when France first obtained a foothold on the Rhine; and its doom was sealed when Austria and Prussia turned aside from that river, and the German national spirit was stifled.

In 1806 Austria completely broke down from sheer exhaustion. To outward appearances Prussia still remained intact, but her integrity was purely fictitious and her political situation undermined. Outside the Tsar she no longer possessed a single friend, and the Tsar's prestige lay buried on the battlefield of Austerlitz. Shunned by England since the day when she accepted Hanover as a gift from Napoleon, despised and hated by Austria, Prussia stood alone facing the giant from beyond the Rhine.

The alliance concluded at Schönbrunn utterly lacked any durable concrete value. Manifestly Napoleon could not tolerate the existence of an independent and undivided

Prussian State between Weser and Vistula if he wished to pursue the war against Great Britain to a successful conclusion and maintain his own predominance in Europe. He was, indeed, undisputed master of the Rhine; in South Germany, in his capacity as High Protector of the Rhenish Confederation, he reigned supreme, and members of his own family occupied a number of thrones. Prussia, however, controlled the coasts of Northern Europe, and was at liberty to enforce, or not to enforce, the Continental blockade as she deemed fit. So long as Prussia covered simultaneously Great Britain's maritime flank and the Russian front, Napoleon could not carry his system to perfection and avoid all possibility of a gap arising therein. And so long as Prussia's unbeaten troops were able to take the field, he did not feel so absolutely secure in the Rhine basin as to care to risk another war against Austria and Russia without removing beforehand any danger likely to arise in that quarter. Thus the logical concatenation of events drove Napoleon from "security" to "conquest," and *vice versa*, ever since he crossed the Rhine as France's standard-bearer, bent on extending his empire to an anational world *imperium*.

In the summer of 1806 French troops stood on German soil, from the Inn to the Sieg, in a wide semi-circle on Prussia's south-western flank. The new Kingdoms of Bavaria and Würtemberg alone accommodated twelve French infantry divisions, whilst three other divisions stood on the Lahn and Rhine. All could be put into the field without the slightest delay in order to support any demands Napoleon might be pleased to make on Prussia, around whose horizon storm clouds gathered fast and thick.

The Treaty of Schönbrunn stipulated that Prussia's ports should be closed to British trade, whereupon Great Britain retorted by declaring all Prussian vessels legitimate prizes of war. This rendered Prussia's situation untenable, and she could no longer postpone her decision to take sides either for or against Napoleon. The period of impassiveness came to an end. After Pitt's death, Napoleon offered the Electorate of Hanover, which shortly before had been given by him to Prussia "for all time," to Great Britain. This humiliation, added to the fact that French troops lay all around Prussia's frontiers within striking distance, stung

Frederic William III to the quick and induced him to despatch an ultimatum to Napoleon requiring the latter to evacuate Southern and Western Germany and refrain from all interference in the affairs of Northern Germany. But even at this supreme moment Frederic William and his advisers lacked sufficient energy to take a really thoroughgoing decision. Instead of placing the entire Army on a war footing and taking the field with 200,000 men, they only ordered a partial mobilization, failed to win over any German State except Saxony as ally, and began negotiations with Russia too late. The Prussians under Duke William Ferdinand of Brunswick, the "man of Valmy," were scarcely 120,000 strong. But instead of awaiting the arrival of the Russians behind the Elbe, or else marshalling all their forces and flinging themselves on the enemy before the latter could emerge, ready for battle, from the Thuringian Forest, they advanced, as though pre-destined to their fate, on the Saale.

The Prussian War, which, Germany having lost the Rhine, decided her destiny, was fought out near the gate of the Saale. Napoleon left the Prussians no time for preparation, but marched immediately with 160,000 men towards the Thuringian Forest, with the intention of outflanking the enemy on the right bank of that river and cutting them off from Berlin. The world listened in breathless suspense.

But not for long. On October 9th the Prussian vanguard under Prince Louis Ferdinand sighted the French close to Saalfeld. And already on October 14th Prussia's fate was sealed on the battlefields of Jena and Auerstedt. These two battles, as a matter of fact, were but two aspects, so to speak, of a single decisive struggle—although tactically disconnected and waged at some 12 miles' distance from each other. On the one hand stood a national Army, steeled by innumerable campaigns, flushed with enthusiasm begotten of countless victories, led by young generals, and directed from the summit by a unique military genius; on the other, an Army whose experience of war was confined to the drilling-field and the parade-ground, conscientious, but lacking in national feeling, and commanded by princes grown old in musty traditional routine. How utterly bereft of skilled generalship the Prussians were soon became manifest. Prince Hohenlohe, in supreme command at Jena, adhering rigidly to Frederic the

Great's idea of an offensive in the open field, saw his Army destroyed systematically regiment by regiment, battalion by battalion. And, incredible though it may appear, no echo of the battle of Jena reached the Prussian Main Army, which, with the Court, was advancing without haste from Weimar to Naumburg, confiding in Hohenlohe's anticipated victory. Not until it arrived in the neighbourhood of Auerstedt did it fall in unexpectedly with three French divisions under General Davout. In the Prussian High Command confusion reigned supreme. Contradictory orders were sent in all directions, the result being chaos. On hearing the news that Hohenlohe had been completely routed and Jena taken by the enemy, panic prevailed, and a general *sauve qui peut* ensued which rapidly assumed the dimensions of a catastrophe.

According to Frederic William III, he "only lost a battle." In reality, of course, he lost infinitely more. Jena-Auerstedt proved the grave of a system—a system synonymous with mummification, which paralysed all initiative, undermined the State's foundations, and was now suddenly unrooted as if by an earthquake.

Two days elapsed before Napoleon grasped the precise nature of a strategic position he had not anticipated. For he himself had been astonished beyond measure on hearing, after the rout of the Prussians under Hohenlohe at Jena, that the Army destroyed by him was not the Prussian Main Army, but only one-half of the Frederic William's forces. Having, however, realized the exact state of affairs, he determined to leave no stone unturned in order to utterly annihilate, by means of a strategic pursuit unexampled in history, what remained of his adversary's troops, and thereafter to overrun Prussia from frontier to frontier. In his own words, he refused to rest "so long as a single man of this Army is still at large." He kept his word. The remnants of Prussia's erstwhile Army were driven as far as Prenzlau and Lübeck, where they surrendered. All fortresses—with the meritorious exceptions of Kolberg, Kosel, and Graudentz—fell like ripe fruit into his hands. And Prussia, devoid of national feeling, bereft of leaders, destitute of statesmen, became a conquered land as far as the Oder.

On October 27th Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph.

The overwhelming defeat of an Army hitherto considered invincible not only entailed the overthrow of the Prussian State, but also placed Germany's fate in Napoleon's hands. As far as Germany was concerned, the question of the Rhine found its solution for several decades to come.

And yet Jena marks the date of Germany's first national awakening. The King of Prussia and his Cabinet, not the Prussian people, took the decision—after egotistically “sitting on the fence” for ten years—to embark upon a war with Napoleon which they could no longer well avoid; and not until Prussia's Army suffered disaster did it become manifest that a petrified *régime* living exclusively on tradition was incapable of checking Napoleon's progress and preventing the advent of a new universal *imperium* under his sceptre.

Napoleon, on the other hand, could only hope to maintain himself in his struggle with Europe and Great Britain by completely breaking away from tradition, and resolutely suppressing all absolute survivals of a dead past. Thus a new world came into existence in which Prussia, after severe visitations, likewise found her place. The battlefields of Jena and Auerstedt were not only the graves of the old Prussian Army; they also transformed the character of the French Army, which henceforth became an instrument of the indomitable will to power of a single man.

When, on November 21st, 1806, Napoleon issued his famous “Berlin Decree,” which prohibited not only trade, but also all communications of any sort with Great Britain, the Continental blockade against the latter became complete.

But although the whole of Europe was now forcibly included within France's sphere of influence, the war did not yet come to an end. Frederick William III still continued to fight conjointly with Russia. The disaster of Friedland followed the indecisive battle of Eylau; whereupon Tsar Alexander I opened negotiations in view of an alliance, leaving Prussia to a fate sealed by the Peace of Tilsit in 1807. Prussia lost all her territory west of the Elbe and also her Polish provinces, and was placed under French military supervision. At bottom, despite the creation of a Grand Duchy of Warsaw, she henceforth constituted a mere buffer State between France and Russia. Prussia was weakened as never before in her history. Napoleon deprived her of

one-half of her territory, compelled her to reduce her Army to 42,000 men, and imposed contributions, the amount of which he purposely omitted to fix; as security for their payment he took possession of Prussia's fortresses, thereby establishing a permanent Army of Occupation in the conquered country. Inextricably entangled in debt, Prussia became a fortified glacis of the French Empire.

Napoleon sacrificed Poland to Alexander I, although only a short time previously he had promised that country its independence. The fact that Alexander joined Napoleon's Continental system and undertook to watch over Austria, considerably facilitated this sacrifice. Alexander likewise obtained freedom of action in regard to Sweden, from whom he wrested Finland, and the possibility of turning his attention once more to Turkey. Russia thus became France's partner in South-Eastern Europe—a rôle formerly played by the Sultan himself, and, in Sobieski's time, by Poland's King. Napoleon's restless brain conceived again the phantastic idea of a Franco-Russian march on India.

But such dreams did not cause him to forget his more immediate aims. The political reshaping of Western Germany was completed. Napoleon took back the Duchy of Berg from his brother-in-law, Murat, into his own hands, created his brother Jerome King of Westphalia, and pushed forward France's frontiers to the Elbe. France's expansion east of the Rhine came to a standstill at the Elbe. Thus was ancient Roman tradition fulfilled, and Magdeburg transformed into France's sally-port towards the East. Here France reached the extreme limit of her advance beyond the Rhine.

But even this extension of his power did not satisfy Napoleon. By inducing Saxony to join the Rhenish Confederation in exchange for the cession of Prussian and Polish territory, Napoleon obtained the possibility of concentrating his forces simultaneously on the Elbe and Vistula against Russia. Strategic developments in the perennial struggle for the Rhine again proceeded more rapidly than political ones.

When the Congress of Erfurt opened in 1808, Germany lay at Napoleon's feet. And yet, although he never persecuted and dismembered any State so deliberately as he did Prussia, he nevertheless regretted later-on in St. Helena that *par égard pour Sa Majesté Impériale le Tsar* he had not destroyed

Prussia's political existence altogether. Recognizing that the Rhine could never be securely in French hands so long as the German spirit (*l'esprit allemand*) still lived, he wrote to his brother Louis: "*il faut dépayser l'esprit allemand, c'est le but principal de ma politique.*" And he suited the action to the word.

But the measures adopted by Napoleon to consolidate his hegemony were not more arbitrary than those to which Great Britain resorted in defence of her policy of the balance of power, as Denmark discovered to her cost in 1807, when a British fleet bombarded Copenhagen. Between British Orders in Council and Napoleonic decrees, nothing remained of the Law of Nations. Having declared war on Portugal, forced the Portuguese Royal Family to flee to Brazil, annexed the Papal State, and taken Pope Pius VII prisoner, Napoleon proceeded to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons and place the Crown of Spain on his brother Joseph's head. This proved the signal for the first national insurrection on the European Continent against Napoleon's despotism. The crisis of French imperialism set in.

Four years' guerrilla war in Spain steadily consumed the flower of the French Army and of those German regiments despatched across the Pyrenees by the Rhenish Confederation. All the deadly hatred of which a fanatically patriotic people, goaded to fury by wanton invasion, can be capable, manifested itself in Spain's war of independence. Napoleon's troops knew that they need expect no pardon in the event of defeat, and the Spaniards' wild fanaticism did not fear even the bloodiest reprisals. This pitiless war nevertheless produced sublimely heroic episodes, as the greatest of which the desperate defence of Saragossa, followed by that city's capture and sack, will always live in history. From the blood-bath at Saragossa rose an unquenchable flame which ignited the martial ardour of the colder nations of Northern Europe, and incited them to throw off the French yoke.

Spain found an ally in Great Britain, and the arrival of British troops in the Peninsula forced France's Armies into the defensive.

Had Napoleon been compelled to rely on France's strength alone, he could not have afforded to let the Peninsular War drag on for five years and to sacrifice 500,000 men in his

vain efforts to subdue an outraged people. But in this case also he leaned for support on the Rhine basin, which had become a strategic centre of his Empire ; its possession enabled him to control both West and East, and to face all sides simultaneously. As Protector of the Rhenish Confederation he proved a match for any Coalition of States and equal to any emergency ; and he was bound to remain so until the day when Germany's national spirit reawakened from its long slumber.

This day had not yet dawned when, in 1809, Austria rose to arms, and her troops, reorganized by Archduke Charles, took the field. The Austrians displayed remarkable capacity alike for attack and defence, and it was only with much difficulty that Napoleon finally succeeded in smashing their resistance at Wagram. On October 14th, 1809, he dictated peace for the last time to a vanquished enemy at Schönbrunn, and decreed a new redistribution of Austria's provinces. But the devastation of the Tyrol, ruthlessly carried out by General Lefèvre, aroused instincts and feelings which Napoleon could never hope to suppress, and Andreas Hofer, whom the French executed as a rebel at Mantua, became henceforth a living symbol for all Germans of the indestructible strength of their national ideal. Nevertheless the cup of Germany's humiliation did not yet overflow. The princes of the Rhenish Confederation were still content to do homage to Napoleon, and the French masters were still securely seated on the Rhine, Weser, and Elbe, and on the North Sea coast.

When Napoleon annexed the Papal State, France reached the pinnacle of her territorial greatness. Her Empire stretched from the North Sea to the Adriatic ; Austria lost possession of the last roads giving her access to the West ; Prussia was a fortified French glacis ; and the Vistula became a base of operations for a French advance into Russia. The gates of the East were open to France.

The entire colossal edifice reared by Napoleon within so short a space of time rested on the secure strategic foundations constituted by France's position on the Rhine. But it would have been well for Napoleon if the legendary prophetess who is said to have appeared to Drusus on the Elbe's banks to warn him against a further advance, and to foretell the end of the "insatiable's" career, had likewise appeared to the

nineteenth-century Cæsar. Since Napoleon could not follow Julius Cæsar's example by invading England, he determined to march on Moscow. Napoleon's universal genius knew no limits, and this utter lack of self-restraint proved fatal to him.

The entire Rhine basin being now in one single hand, the struggle for that river momentarily came to an end, and in this sense Napoleon might legitimately claim to be Charlemagne's immediate successor. The Rhenish problem consequently played no part in Napoleon's strategic calculations when he embarked on his enterprise against Russia. Having conquered both the Elbe and the Oder, Napoleon set out from the Vistula, just as in former days Louis XIV had started from the Rhine. The latter did not again become a strategic factor until Napoleon was compelled to summon reserves to his aid from France, and until his Armies in Spain suffered decisive reverses.

Napoleon reckoned that the Russian campaign would only last six months. He counted on one-third of Russia's forces being tied down by the Russo-Turkish war, and he therefore hastened to renew France's traditional friendship with Turkey. For the first time in history a French offensive against Eastern Europe was combined with a simultaneous Turkish advance in a northerly direction; the fact of Germany having been eliminated rendered such a combination possible. But Turkey came to terms with Russia sooner than Napoleon expected. In his sheer inexhaustible imagination old dreams of a conquest of the Levant then revived. With his mind's eye he again saw himself as master of Constantinople, which he planned to attack from Galicia after having crushed Alexander.

While such immense prospects were being opened out, no thought could assuredly be spared for the Rhine, much less for the "German" Rhine, the very name of which was omitted from every political tract, and which seemed to have vanished from the list of European problems still awaiting solution. And yet although the Rhine temporarily lacked alike strategic and political importance, it was at bottom for this river's possession that the struggle still continued when Napoleon crossed the Vistula; for Great Britain, who had been expelled from all the ports and estuaries of Continental Europe, and who faced grave social and financial difficulties

at home, consistently regarded France's control of the Rhine and the Dutch coast as the root of all evil and the source of all warlike complications. This being the case, Great Britain resolved to continue the war at any price. She knew that she fought for very existence, since she could neither dispense with Europe nor voluntarily accept a perpetual menace to her own shores. British world supremacy and French Continental hegemony are necessarily incompatible with each other—much less could the former view with equanimity the erection of a universal monarchy such as Napoleon planned. Thus Great Britain would not hear of peace; albeit Pitt had departed this life, and the British nation was steadily becoming exhausted.

No genial successor had been found for Pitt, but however mediocre British statesmen of that day may have been, they at least possessed the gift of perseverance in the face of enormous difficulties, and they inherited the full measure of the Britisher's traditional hatred for his ancestral enemy. They were conscious of their heavy responsibility, and this consciousness steeled both their patience and their energy. They assisted Spain, encouraged the Bourbons, and exercised Britain's sea power with ruthless brutality. Exasperated by Great Britain's maritime policy, the United States took up arms in 1812 to defend their rights on the high seas. Thus Napoleon's cession of Louisiana ultimately brought forth fruit, if somewhat tardily. But even the additional burden of this new war could not impair Great Britain's determination to fight the "Corsican ogre" to the bitter end.

This dogged tenacity of British statesmen was encouraged by Russia's defection from her alliance with Napoleon. On December 31st, 1811, Alexander I signed a Ukase restoring its freedom of trade to his famished country, whereby Russia's ports were reopened to British vessels for the first time since the Peace of Tilsit in 1807. Napoleon retorted by declaring war on Alexander and invading Russia.

On June 23rd, 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen. Before him lay the unfathomable abyss of a wholly new and unexplored theatre of war. The immensity of space rendered an encounter impossible. Napoleon was unable to attack the various enemy formations singly, whilst, on the other hand, the Russians were incapable of concentrating their forces.

Against the will of either belligerent, the French advance thus continued across the Niemen and Dvina to the Dnieper, before the first serious collision occurred. On reaching the Dnieper Napoleon had already lost 130,000 men and 80,000 horses on the road.

Although the Russians had meanwhile concentrated their forces, they did not offer battle, but retreated along the route towards Moscow, and Napoleon allowed himself to be led astray into following them. Not until reaching Borodino, 60 miles west of Moscow, did they halt, and a bloody encounter ensued on September 7th. The Russians were defeated and driven from the field with heavy loss. But Napoleon did not venture to utilize his last intact reserves—namely, the Imperial Guard—for a pursuit which would have transformed defeat into a rout, and all too modestly contented himself with the dearly bought victory gained on the battlefield.

The road to Moscow now lay open. The Russian Army took up positions south of Moscow and bided their time. On September 14th Napoleon entered Moscow with 90,000 troops, and immediately sought to open peace negotiations. But Alexander remained obdurate and proclaimed a national war. The campaign was lost to the French.

Napoleon could neither march on St. Petersburg nor turn his steps towards the Ukraine, and consequently could occupy neither of these vital nerve centres of the mighty Empire.

Too late he discovered that his centre had advanced much too far, whilst his Army's wings were engaged on the upper course of the Bug and the lower course of the Duna with numerically superior adversaries, whereas on the route to Moscow, between Dnieper and Vistula, only two weak corps stood as reserves. There was no time to be lost. An immediate retreat became imperative. That this retreat developed into an appalling military catastrophe is to be primarily attributed, not to the burning of Moscow, but to winter's early advent—the first snowflakes fell as early as October 13th. With 80,000 troops and an immense baggage train, Napoleon left Moscow on October 19th, Kutusoff following on his flank with 115,000 Russians. Rearguard skirmishes and privations thinned the French ranks. Thousands of corpses remained behind at every bivouac. On November 13th 45,000 Frenchmen reached Smolensk, and on November 26th the

Grande Armée fought its way across the ice-strewn Beresina. The bridges breaking down, thousands were drowned. The survivors fled in wild haste westwards. On December 5th Napoleon parted from his ill-fated Army and hurried in swiftly drawn sleighs to Paris. Behind him a shapeless mass rolled forward, mercilessly harassed by Cossacks and pursued by flocks of ravenous carrion crows. Kutusoff halted on the Niemen.

On entering his capital, Napoleon found the flames of the Peninsular War burning more fiercely than ever, Wellington having taken the offensive in Spain in May 1812. Notwithstanding this fact, the Emperor decided to withdraw from there a large number of troops necessary to partially *combler le vide* produced by his ill-starred Russian campaign; he therefore recalled Marshal Soult, with 12,000 picked men, to Paris, where Napoleon was busy organizing a new Army, to which the war-tried veterans from Spain were destined to act as *cadres*. But although 450,000 recruits could be enrolled in the newly formed Imperial regiments, France's national will, unbalanced by the immeasurableness of Napoleon's vertiginous schemes, showed palpable signs of weakening. His magic name alone now held his Armies together and spurred them to action.

The Treaty of Tilsit prohibited Prussia from keeping a standing Army exceeding 42,000 men. But the old system of mercenaries had been abolished and replaced by universal compulsory service, limited—in view of the Army's diminutive size—to a period of three months, and operating in such a way as to permit the recruits acquiring within this short space of time the rudiments of military knowledge, after which they resumed their ordinary civilian pursuits. The result was that after five years Prussia found herself in possession of a national Army, incomparably inferior in respect of skill and other soldierly qualities to the French, and wholly lacking experience, but animated nevertheless by an ardour and a spirit of revenge born of years of oppression and humiliation.

With this Army Prussia began the war to regain her independence. With no light heart, assuredly, did Frederic William III, by nature inclined to temporize and to postpone decisions, take his resolution. Napoleon, it is true, had lost a campaign and an Army, but not a single battle, and Prussia,

whose capital and fortresses were occupied by French troops, was completely at his mercy. Austria regarded Russia, whose troops came to a standstill on the Niemen, with unconcealed suspicion. But events proved stronger than Frederic William's caution. When, on December 13th, 1812, General York drew up a convention at Tauroggen, the die was definitely cast.

On February 27th, 1813, Frederic William III concluded, by the Treaty of Kalish, an alliance with Russia, and on March 17th he published his Manifesto "To My People," calling on them to rally in defence of "their most sacred possessions," and to shake-off the French yoke. The Manifesto omitted to mention the Rhine; but the feeling nevertheless everywhere prevailed that the French must be driven back across this river. Already in November 1812 Baron Stein had explained to the Russian Court the necessity of liberating all German-speaking regions west of the Rhine, as far as the Scheldt, the Ardennes, and the Vosges, and reuniting them with their mother country. In January 1813 an uprising broke out on the Lower Rhine, which was pitilessly repressed; but the national instinct of the inhabitants could not be destroyed, nor Germany's reawakening prevented.

Napoleon found himself in a position to open hostilities on the Elbe, the Russian halt on the Niemen and Prussia's preparations having left him time to renew his forces. Austria had not yet decided to join his adversaries, and he could still count on his Rhenish vassals. Undisputed control of the Rhine and of the whole of Prussia as far as the Elbe, and the possession of a line of fortresses on the Oder, enabled him to wage war in Saxony and threaten Austria's flank. Attacking the allied Prussians and Russians at Gross-Görschen on May 2nd, 1813, he compelled them to retreat, but the pursuing French were checked in their turn on May 26th by Blücher at Haynau, a mishap which made Napoleon desirous of concluding an armistice in order to obtain reinforcements and draw over Austria to his side. But he lost the diplomatic game by refusing Austria the concessions she demanded, and this gave Great Britain time for a rapid intervention. On June 14th she concluded a subsidy agreement with Prussia, and on the following day a similar agreement with Russia. Almost immediately afterwards Wellington's Anglo-Spanish Army won a decisive victory at Vittoria. On June 27th

Austria, Russia, and Prussia signed a secret treaty at Reichenberg, by which Austria pledged herself to support the Allies. Great Britain's standpoint prevailed. At the same time Sweden's Army took the field under Marshal Bernadotte. The fourth anti-French Coalition was formed. And since its object—namely, the shaking-off of Napoleon's yoke—could only be attained by driving the French back across the Rhine, the campaign necessarily developed into a struggle for possession of that river.

Having repulsed Blücher at Goldberg, on the Katzbach rivulet, on August 23rd, Napoleon hastened to Dresden, summoned thither by news that the main Allied Army of 220,000 Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, under Prince Schwarzenberg, was advancing from Bohemia on Leipzig. But at this critical moment he failed to display those qualities of keen eagle-like vision, fearless audacity, and unexampled rapidity of decision, hitherto characteristic of his generalship ; he did not attempt one of those brilliant enveloping movements which so often proved successful in earlier campaigns. He contented himself with a frontal operation, driving the Allies on August 28th, after a two days' encounter, back into the Erzgebirge. This tactical success seemed to revive all his wonted energy, and he conceived anew a strategic plan worthy of himself. This consisted in a relentless pursuit of the retreating Allies, who were to be forced to accept a battle which could not but end in their annihilation. But this bold scheme collapsed owing to the failure of Napoleon's Marshals. Oudinot, facing Bernadotte in the North, was defeated at Grossbeeren ; Marshal Macdonald, entrusted with the task of keeping the Silesian Army of 100,000 men under Blücher in check, was beaten on the Katzbach ; Marshal Vandamme, pursuing the retreating enemy, was surrounded by Prussians near Kulm and the bulk of his Army captured or dispersed ; and, finally, Marshal Ney, despatched by the Emperor against Bernadotte with instructions to push through to Berlin, was defeated by General von Bülow at Dennewitz. From all sides the Allies commenced to advance against Napoleon's central position.

Determined not to be caught in this net and to keep open direct communications with Mayence—anxiety concerning the Rhine began to manifest itself—Napoleon concentrated his

forces around Leipzig at the very moment when tidings reached him that Marshal Soult had evacuated Spain and withdrawn across the Pyrenees. The erstwhile Invincible's lucky star was manifestly on the wane. And on October 16th, 1813, began, in the plain around Leipzig, the Battle of the Nations, which sealed his fate in Germany.

Napoleon definitely lost Germany at Leipzig. He did not attempt, after leaving the battlefield, to break through towards the North, in order to carry on the war there, but withdrew to the Rhine. The Rhenish Confederation having received its death-blow at Leipzig, where the King of Saxony surrendered to the Allies, there was no longer any possibility for Napoleon to remain on German soil. A sudden brusque jerk transferred the theatre of war to the Rhine, and ancient strategic laws were again put into operation. True, 150,000 French troops still held Prussian and Saxon fortresses, still occupied the region between Elbe and Rhine ; but for Napoleon they were lost. A national uprising rent the strategic net woven by French hegemony around Germany and drove Napoleon across the Rhine, which, however, he did not reach without a struggle, for General Wrede attempted to cross his path at Hanau. Having defeated him on October 30th, Napoleon crossed the Rhine two days later with 90,000 men and 200 guns. He never recrossed it.

The Allies suffered heavy losses at Leipzig ; but in the eyes of the German nation the sacrifice was amply justified. And yet, from a military standpoint, the Allied victory there only amounted to a half-success. The victors had not been able to prevent Napoleon's escape ; and they now found themselves compelled to commence a new campaign against him, since Napoleon did not dream of peace. He refused to relinquish either Holland or Italy or North-West Germany, and summoned what still remained of France's able-bodied men to fight for the Rhine and for the little King of Rome's crown.

Meanwhile the Allies sat in conference at Frankfurt, where they discussed the question whether they should or not cross the Rhine, defined by them as "Germany's frontier." Metternich, Vienna's new political star, issued a proclamation in which the Allies solemnly declared that they were not waging war on France, but only against the "excessive power

usurped by Emperor Napoleon outside the frontiers of his Empire." Since this manifestly implied that the Rhine constituted Germany's boundary, it likewise implied a renunciation of centuries-old claims, and destroyed the most cherished hopes entertained by the German people after heroically throwing off a foreign yoke, and thus putting an end to long years of oppression and humiliation. European reaction, indissolubly associated with Metternich's name, thus commenced its work by repudiating Germany's time-honoured claim to the Rhine—on the satisfaction of which depended both Europe's equilibrium and Germany's future—and abandoning its left bank to her traditional foe, thereby sacrificing the geographical, historic, linguistic, economic, and strategic unity of that river's basin.

The Allies prepared to renounce all claims to those territories annexed by France during the preceding three centuries—the frontier of the Meuse, Alsace, the Duchy of Lorraine, the Saar basin, the Palatinate, and the Rhineland, with its Imperial Towns and the Archbishoprics of Cologne, Mayence, and Treves. The allied monarchs rendered, albeit unconsciously, a tardy homage to the French Revolution, in the hope of inclining it to peace, and declined to cross the Rhine. And the German people themselves were still far from being in a position to decide their own destinies. In Germany there still existed a deeply rooted antithesis between "the idea of the State" (*Staatsgedanke*) and the national idea.

In their opposition to Metternich's political conceptions, German patriots, such as Arndt and Görres, found in Napoleon himself their best auxiliary; and they likewise received valuable support from Great Britain, who insisted on France being confined within her "ancient frontiers," delayed negotiations, and obliged her Allies to continue the war. Napoleon being unable to cross the Rhine, the Allies were themselves reluctantly compelled to advance.

They reached the Rhine in November 1813. The main Army marched against the Upper Rhine, the Silesian Army lay encamped between the Neckar and the Lahn, Prussian and Russian corps belonging to the Northern Army advanced under Bülow on the Lower Rhine, whilst Bernadotte and his Swedes turned their attention to Denmark.

Bülow opened the campaign. Leaving a corps at Wesel,

he entered Holland in November in order to reinstate the Prince of Orange. The French retreated towards Nymwegen, where Macdonald, by command of Napoleon, awaited the combined Russian and Prussian attack. Napoleon thus deprived himself of forces which he might have put to good use on the main theatre of operations behind the Meuse; but he could not bring himself to abandon possession of the Rhine's estuary. For this reason he voluntarily weakened his position on the Upper Rhine, where the Allies' principal assault was impending.

On December 20th Marshal Schwarzenberg crossed the Rhine with 200,000 troops; leaving his right wing before the Alsatian fortresses, he swerved with his main force past Bâle, traversed Switzerland, and penetrated into the valley of the Doubs in order to gain possession of the passes of the Côte d'Or and the plateau of Langres. After Schwarzenberg had crossed the Saône, General Wrede led the right wing, which had remained in Alsace, against Lunéville.

The Silesian Army crossed the Rhine on December 31st in the region around Lahnstein, Caub, and Mannheim, left detachments to watch the fortresses of Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein, brushed aside the weak forces left by Napoleon on the Moselle, reached the Saar on January 9th, and on January 17th advanced on Toul *via* Nancy, at the same time as Schwarzenberg ascended the Langres plateau.

Napoleon's Marshals, whom he instructed to defend the Rhine only *pro forma*, withdrew conformably with his order across the Moselle, Saône, and Meuse to the mountain ranges forming Old France's natural frontiers. Macdonald alone was absent from the great strategic camp in the Marne basin. He remained too long at Nymwegen to be able to reach the theatre of decisive operations in time, and when compelled at last by his adversaries to retire across the Meuse, Napoleon was already grappling in a deadly struggle with a numerically superior enemy.

Napoleon's campaign in 1814 reminds one of his Italian campaigns in 1796. The qualities displayed by him at the wane of his career were even more brilliant than those revealed at its birth. But in 1814 events told against him. Only one-fifth of the conscripts called-in obeyed the summons. France was morally and materially exhausted, and the political

instinct of her fickle masses began to turn against their national hero. Yet he still continued his struggle for a European hegemony based on possession of the Rhine, he still upheld France's traditional policy at the very moment when the French nation, recognizing the inevitable, prepared to adapt itself cleverly to circumstances which had passed beyond its control. France began to familiarize herself with the idea of her "old frontiers" and a return of the Bourbons—without, however, renouncing one iota of her claims to Continental hegemony.

Animated by mutual jealousy and distrust, the Allies resolved to re-open negotiations with Napoleon, and delegates assembled in conference at Châtillon. Napoleon found himself isolated, his own Marshals urging him to accept the terms proposed. These were more severe than the previous ones, for Metternich, suspicious of Tsar Alexander and desirous of sparing Austria a new war, now abandoned his Frankfurt Manifesto and demanded, in agreement with Great Britain, France's acceptance of her frontiers of 1792. Thus the Rhine's left bank emerged once more from out of the maze of Cabinet intrigues. Austria, under Metternich's guidance, took the lead in the diplomatic game, but the notion of a "Greater Germany" remained foreign to her.

Negotiations were still proceeding when Napoleon brusquely resumed hostilities. A short, albeit dramatic, campaign ensued, but Napoleon's resources no longer sufficed. Yet although he could only muster 70,000 troops as against 230,000 under the Allied flags, Schwarzenberg feared to attempt to strike a decisive blow, lest a national rising in France, rallying around her Emperor in distress, should result. Schwarzenberg's fears were not entirely groundless. France's invaded provinces looked on Napoleon as their defender, and awaited from him their liberation. The invasion revived memories of Valmy and the campaign in Champagne, and with the aid of these reminiscences a highly sensitive nation rapidly forged a new diplomatic weapon—destined, one hundred years later, to produce a deadly effect. Henceforth the Germans were stamped as "aggressors" and rendered responsible for wanton invasions of a peaceful country. The French preferred to cast a discreet veil over Philippe-le-Bel's policy, the Armagnac raids, the House of Valois's aggressions,

Richelieu's imperialist ambition, Louis XIV's predatory wars, his successor's frivolous incursions into German territory, the conquests of the French Revolution and Empire, the methodically organized "sucking dry" of Germany by Napoleon's Armies; and they chose to see only the campaign in Champagne and the war now going on in their eastern provinces—in reality the first return blow ever struck by Germany since France, many centuries before, began the great struggle for the Rhine, and which, into the bargain, was being dealt on behalf of the dethroned Bourbons. France, who did not forget ancient Roman claims, who had never been at a loss for subtle casuistry to substantiate her own demands, now impressed with jealous care on the minds of her children what she considered to be the significance of this first great German invasion, to which were added memories of 1792, although many thousands of French Royalists then fought alongside the Allies under French generals. Thus an entirely new philosophy of history arose for the benefit of future French generations. Henceforth France was accounted the innocent victim of an aggressive and barbarous neighbour thirsting for conquest, the home of civilization, the champion of liberty and democracy—in carefully stressed contradistinction to Prussia.

Napoleon took advantage of this frame of mind animating the French nation to remain obdurate in the matter of concessions. He declined to accept the frontiers of 1792, although such an acceptance would have saved his throne, and persisted in demanding "France's natural frontiers"—a demand which implied her unquestioned supremacy on the Rhine. The Allies replied to this intransigence by signing on March 9th, at Chaumont, a new "defensive treaty of alliance" binding them to confine France within her frontiers of 1792, "even if it should prove necessary to fight for twenty years to attain this end."

But it did not prove necessary. Blücher successfully resisted an attack under the walls of Laon, Wellington took Bordeaux, the main Allied Army under Schwarzenberg advanced on Paris. The Parisians revolted against their Emperor whose Marshals refused obedience to him. On April 4th, 1814, deserted by all save a few thousand of his Old Guard, Napoleon capitulated and signed his abdication at Fontainebleau. But

he renounced nothing for his country except what circumstances imperatively required him to abandon. Above all, he did not renounce France's claim to the left bank of the Rhine, although France found herself compelled to accept as her frontiers those traced in 1792.

On March 13th, 1814, the victorious Coalition signed the first Peace of Paris with Louis XVIII. As remnants of her booty, France kept the former Papal enclaves of Avignon and the Venaissin, the Würtembergian seigniory of Mömpelgard, the fortress of Landau, and the towns of Saarlouis and Saarbrücken. The greatest epoch in the perennial struggle for the Rhine ended with a peace which, whilst liberating Germany from Napoleon's despotic yoke, did not restore the "Greater Germany" of yore, any more than it removed the lasting French menace to the Rhine's left bank.

The Congress of Vienna made the task of defending that river henceforth incumbent on the newly created German Confederation, consisting of thirty-eight sovereign German States—thirty-four Monarchies and four Free Cities—loosely bound together in an elastic constitutional union. The Saar basin remained in French hands; but the Rhine basin, from the Nahe to the Dutch frontier, was ceded by way of compensation to Prussia, who renounced her conquests in Saxony and returned to the Rhine, which she had abandoned in 1795 for the Vistula.

Deliberations in Vienna were violently interrupted by Napoleon's lightning-like return from Elba. But this time, when he stood confronting a hostile Europe with his magic personality and his magnificent Praetorian Army, the French nation did not follow him.

On June 4th the Emperor stood between Philippeville and Maubeuge, facing Blücher and Wellington. His first aim was to reconquer the Netherlands, and by defending them Great Britain simultaneously thought to keep France away from England's Continental glacis. As a counterpoise to France, the Vienna Congress had created the Kingdom of the United Netherlands, stretching along the Sambre, Scheldt, and Meuse, between the Yser and the Rhine. Prussia entered the lists in defence of her newly acquired Rhenish territory and of German freedom. Great Britain and Prussia were thus linked together by a strong bond of common interests;

they determined to keep France away from Flanders and the Rhine, and to put an end definitely to Napoleon's autocratic ambition.

Napoleon was ready before his adversaries. Not without a last heroic campaign could he finally abandon the scene of his gigantic exploits.

With amazing rapidity he flung his troops on the Allies, still scattered in their quarters between the Sambre, Scheldt, and Meuse. Crossing the Sambre near Charleroi on June 15th, he drove the Prussian outposts back on Fleurus, and then divided his forces, despatching Ney with 25,000 men towards Quatre-Bras against the British, and Grouchy with 46,000 men along the road to Liége, to hold the Prussians in check. His plan was to engage each enemy Army separately, in the hope of completely destroying at least one of them, thereby chasing the Prussians over the Meuse and compelling the British to flee to Antwerp, whilst he himself would enter Brussels in triumph.

The swiftness of his movements created consternation among the Allies on the Belgian theatre of operations. As for Schwarzenberg's Austrian and South German troops on the Upper Rhine, they never came into action at all.

On June 6th a double battle took place. Napoleon himself broke through the Prussian centre at Ligny, and drove Blücher's mutilated battalions from the field; whilst Ney with difficulty held his own at Quatre-Bras. Thus no strategic advantage could be obtained. Jena did not repeat itself, and Napoleon did not succeed this time in turning the Prussian flank and annihilating Blücher's Army. Instead of retreating over the Meuse, Blücher assembled his beaten troops at Wavre, so as to effect a junction with Wellington, who kept the Emperor at bay at Waterloo.

The Battle of Waterloo, embellished by legend, appears to-day like a colossal painting—something resembling Michelangelo's Sistine frescoes—depicting Napoleon's farewell to the world's stage. It reveals nothing of his strategic insight, of his marvellous tactical *finesse*, of his characteristic enveloping movements, of that lightning-like rapidity of decision coupled with perfect calmness and presence of mind, which so often transformed, as though by a miracle, apparently imminent defeat into brilliant victory. Waterloo nevertheless con-

stituted an appropriate ending to the most colossal drama of modern history, symbolizing as it did Napoleon's exit in a titanic clash of arms which left no space wherein military genius could manifest itself.

When, at eleven o'clock in the morning of June 18th, after riding down the front of his massed columns to wildly enthusiastic cries of *Vive l'Empereur*, Napoleon gives the order to attack, 70,000 men are pitted against each other on either side. The French fail to break through Wellington's centre. After hours of desperate fighting, Napoleon orders the Imperial Guard to charge. Wellington's firing squares, which have resisted throughout the day, are shaken. But at the most critical moment, when daylight is fading away and the twilight gathering, firing is heard on the French right flank. Notwithstanding his defeat at Ligny two days previously, Blücher is approaching. All is lost, and, surrounded by the remnant of his heroic Old Guard, the Emperor retires, like an idol fallen from its pedestal, under cover of night from the blood-soaked battlefield, whilst Blücher and Wellington clasp hands. Such is the picture of Waterloo as bequeathed to successive generations.

Thus the co-operation of Great Britain and Prussia frustrated Napoleon's last heroic endeavour to push forward to the Rhine. Gneisenau, following in hot pursuit, chased the retreating French as far as Laon. Eleven days after Waterloo Blücher's troops reached the Seine, and on July 10th, 1815, the Allied monarchs entered Paris for the second time. On November 20th the second Peace of Paris was signed. It deprived France of her frontiers of 1792 and restored those of 1790. She consequently lost Saarbrücken, Saarlouis, and Landau, but kept Alsace-Lorraine. The Holy Alliance, formed to maintain peace and prevent the spread of democratic ideas equally distasteful to all monarchs, henceforth dominated Europe. Great Britain alone refused to join it, pretexting that her constitutional sovereign cannot perform an act of State without his Ministers' consent. After breaking France's hegemony, destroying French naval power, and re-establishing the European equilibrium, Great Britain retired once more into her "splendid isolation" and resumed her attitude of independence towards Continental complications. She had won the gigantic struggle, in which Aboukir

and Trafalgar proved to be of greater importance than Marengo and Austerlitz, and the effect of Jena had been wiped out by that of Waterloo.

The struggle for world supremacy, which commenced on the Rhine and spread to Egypt, Gibraltar, and Moscow, now returned to the Rhine, where we find Prussia henceforth seated as predominant German Power in Western Europe. But that struggle was far from being decided. France did not renounce her claims ; she merely adapted herself to circumstances. As heir to Louis XIV, if not to the Revolution, Louis XVIII remained in possession of Strasbourg.

If France's national pride swallowed the first Peace of Paris because the latter was based, not on military defeat, but on a capitulation, it never forgot Waterloo. Hardly had the great battle come to an end, when an unquenchable desire for *revanche* began to pervade the French nation, whose hatred concentrated itself mainly upon Prussia, to whom it attributed Napoleon's defeat. Napoleon showed himself at St. Helena more engrossed in reminiscences of Marengo and Waterloo than of his other battles, and constantly endeavoured to justify his conduct on either occasion so as to disarm criticism. And yet the whole tragic episode of the Hundred Days was not less necessary a phase in his life than any other—in the life of this Titan, the most genial master of the art of war, who moulded Europe's destinies as though she were wax, and who will live in history alike as the greatest of destroyers and the greatest of creators.

In Napoleon's gigantic plans the Rhine never played a leading part, for it already belonged strategically to France when he appeared on the scene. Indirectly he conquered it on the Adige and the Fontanone, but he never fought on its banks. *Ab initio* his power based not only on possession of the Seine, but also on that of the Rhine. *From here he dominated Germany and Italy, whilst holding Great Britain in check.*

When, after the battle of Leipzig, Napoleon withdrew to the Rhine's left bank, he likewise abandoned the basis of his predominant position. He knew that neither the Army he brought back with him from Leipzig, nor even 600,000 troops, would be sufficient to defend the Rhine should the Allies advance on it with their united forces. But he believed that a decisive victory in Champagne or Flanders, terminating

by the annihilation of the enemy, would enable him to reconquer the left bank at a single stroke. He might have obtained such a crushing victory in the summer of 1815. Failing to do so, his race was run.

Great Britain was well pleased to see Prussia, in 1815, mounting guard on the Rhine, and she kept her own Army under Wellington three years in Northern France to guarantee peace. This shows how vividly conscious she was at that time of the essential solidarity of Anglo-Prussian interests. But France rested after a twenty years' war, and the common aim of Great Britain and Prussia seemed accomplished.

The Napoleonic epos had come to an end. In Prussia and the other Continental States reaction reigned supreme, paralysing the *élan* that gave rise to the Wars of Liberation. The industrial era dawned, on the Rhine as elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RHINE FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE TREATY OF FRANKFURT

Congress of Vienna—France's recovery—Franco-Russian *rapprochement*—French activity—General dissatisfaction with the second Treaty of Paris—The Alsatian question in 1815—Humboldt and Archduke Charles—Great Britain and Belgium—France's position on the Rhine—French invasion of Spain—Tsar Alexander I and Chateaubriand—The Greek War of Independence—The struggle for the Dardanelles—France's aspirations in North Africa—Franco-Russian designs in the Near East—France resumes her “forward” policy on the Rhine—Polignac's plans—The July Revolution and the conquest of Algiers—Belgium's uprising in 1830—Turkey and Egypt—International Conference in London—France's demand for compensation on the Rhine—Reawakening of Germany—Dethronement of Louis Philippe—Napoleon III—Crimean War—Congress of Paris—Napoleon III, Italian unity, and Austria—Solferino and Magenta—Bismarck's *début*—Napoleon III and Prussia—The war of 1846—Great Britain's attitude—Bismarck at Biarritz—The war of 1866—Bismarck's policy—Napoleon's demands for compensation—The strategic problem of the Austro-Prussian War—Sadowa—Disappointment in France—Napoleon's diplomatic defeat on the Rhine—Bismarck and the Belgian problem—The question of Luxemburg—The North German Confederation—French public opinion demands the Rhine—The Roman question—The Hohenzollern candidature to the Spanish Throne—King William of Prussia in Bad Ems—The “Ems telegram”—France's declaration of war—Bismarck, the renovator of Germany—Great Britain and Belgium—Franco-German War—Sedan—The Third French Republic—Peace negotiations—Bismarck demands Alsace-Lorraine—Great Britain's attitude—The French Republic continues the fight—Foundation of the German Empire—Bombardment of Paris—The French National Assembly—Treaty of Frankfurt.

THE new frontiers created by the Congress of Vienna presented no guarantee of durability. Russia's entry into the arena of European politics shifted the latter's centre of gravity to the East. Russia's victory over Napoleon, her Armies' advance from Moscow to Paris, Tsar Alexander I's position as initiator of the new Holy Alliance—all contributed to increase immensely her influence in Europe, with the consequence that the problem of the Dardanelles began to overshadow the Rhenish problem. And this state of things

continued so long as France contented herself with the frontiers imposed on her in 1814 and refrained from an aggressive policy on the Rhine.

Since the restored House of Bourbon had been, so to speak, an ally of the European monarchies in their coalition against the Revolution and Empire, France did not feel isolated at Vienna. After the Bourbons' return France resumed her old place in the European family of States, and through the medium of the Holy Alliance her dynastic interests were linked to those of the other Continental Powers. The solidarity uniting Russia, Austria, and Prussia as the result of the partition of Poland, was in no sense directed against France. Already in 1814 Alexander saw in a restored French Monarchy a future auxiliary, and Russian diplomacy therefore logically adopted the standpoint that the Allies were waging war, not on France, but on Napoleon individually. This policy marks the first step towards a *rapprochement* between France and Russia.

Louis XVIII's scepticism and *bonhomie* proved more advantageous for France's reconstruction than even the fiery zeal of a really great sovereign could have been. In Count Richelieu, a descendant of the great Cardinal, he found a statesman, and in Baron Louis a financier, who liberated France within three years from her war indemnity and from foreign occupation. In 1818 Wellington's troops retired from Northern France and the Netherlands. In the same year France signified, at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, her adhesion to the Holy Alliance. In 1819 Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr completed her Army's reorganization. Thus only a few years after Napoleon's final downfall she reappeared as an active participator in world politics.

On the other hand, reaction triumphed in Central Europe. Metternich made it incumbent on the German Federal Diet to suppress by force of arms any disorders which might break out in any of the various Confederate States; the latter, at the same time, undertook to come to each other's aid to repress popular insurrections; and they further adopted the principle that the validity of the Constitution of any single Confederate State is limited by the concentration of all State authority in the sovereign's hands.

Reaction thus stifled the impetus given by the War of

Liberation. Germany, it is true, had shaken off the foreigner's yoke, but she failed to attain her unity. The German people complained that the second Treaty of Paris did not restore Germany's ancient frontiers; whilst the French, on the other hand, saw in the imposition of the frontiers of 1790 a mutilation of France's national territory. Thus the decisions taken in Vienna caused equal dissatisfaction in both countries. Vainly did Wilhelm von Humboldt utter the warning words: "Peace must be founded on Europe's security . . . and a redistribution of forces constitutes the only means of averting new perils. . . . Those Powers whose territory is adjacent to France must have secure frontiers, and they can only defend themselves by recovering certain fortresses which France, ever since she took them, has invariably used as bases of attack."

Neither Russia nor Austria could rise to such serene heights of political wisdom. The most extreme demand advanced by Austria in 1815 had been that the fortifications of Strasbourg should be dismantled, and Archduke Charles himself did not insist on "Germany's citadel" being restored to her. Baron Stein endeavoured to convince Tsar Alexander of the necessity of pushing back France's frontier to the Vosges, but without success. Frederick William III did not venture to advocate the reincorporation of Alsace with Germany, since he considered his hands tied by the cession of the Rhineland to Prussia. Under these circumstances, the protests of those South German States which, since 1642, had been constantly exposed to French pressure on their flank, could not but be wholly ineffectual. As for Great Britain, she considered she had no interest in Strasbourg's return to Germany. Since 1814 she saw no farther than Belgium, and confined her solicitude to the emancipation of Flanders and Brabant from French tutelage. For this reason Wellington applied himself, during the period of occupation of the Netherlands, to improving the ring of old fortresses which during two centuries had protected the Low Countries against French aggression. Having done this, he thought everything achieved.

The Congress of Vienna once more eliminated the Rhine's source from the vicissitudes of the struggle for that river. This struggle had been carried into Switzerland by the wars

of the French Revolution and Empire—the result being to impress all Powers, including France, with the strategic importance of the region in which the Rhine takes its rise, and to convince them anew of the advisability of permanently neutralizing a flanking position equally menacing for all.

The Rhine's estuary lay in Dutch hands, but Germanic influence in the Netherlands had been greatly impaired. Desirous of withdrawing the former Spanish provinces from French influence and transforming them into a barrier against France, Great Britain exerted her influence in favour of their union with the Netherlands Republic. But Belgium's "gallicization" had progressed too far, the religious differences separating her from Holland were too pronounced, for the newly created "United Netherlands" to possess internal stability.

By retaining Alsace, France likewise retained her claim to the entire left bank of the Rhine—a claim confirmed to a certain extent by a European Areopagus. Thanks to the retention of Alsace, she kept all the advantages of her geographically advanced position in regard to Central Europe, whilst, being still in possession of the Upper Rhine, she continued to dominate South Germany. Her rapid recovery as a Great Power was clearly evidenced in 1823, when the Holy Alliance delegated her to restore Ferdinand VII's absolutist *régime* in Spain, endangered by an anti-reactionary movement. Conformably with this decision a French Army of 100,000 men crossed the Pyrenees in Napoleon's tracks, and drove the weak Spanish constitutional forces as far as Cadiz, practically without resistance.

At the same Congress of Verona which entrusted France with her "Spanish mandate," Chateaubriand, who had been appointed Foreign Minister, sought to win Tsar Alexander I's support for France's traditional Rhenish policy. Already eight years after the re-establishment of European peace, France manifested her readiness to recommence her struggle for the Rhine, consequently for hegemony in Europe. Although Alexander declined the invitation, he drew closer those ties of friendship uniting France and Russia since the Congress of Vienna. For he needed France's support in the Near East, where the future Balkan *imbroglio* cast its first shadows.

France's surprising action in Spain aroused Great Britain's suspicions. Great Britain viewed with deep concern the development of French trade with Spain's colonies and South America, which resulted from France's intervention in the Peninsula. But France did not yet possess sufficient freedom of action to present any considerable danger for British world interests. And the Greek War of Independence, breaking out about this time, riveted universal attention on the Dardanelles.

A wave of Philhellenism swept all Western countries. Everywhere poets arose to sing Greek liberty in passionate strophes. On October 20th, 1827, combined British, French, and Russian squadrons destroyed a Turco-Egyptian fleet in the roadstead of Navarino. The great historic problem of the Dardanelles, of the possession of the Golden Horn, monopolized Europe's interest.

The Cabinet of St. James disapproved the British Admiral's action at Navarino, fearing lest the destruction of Turkey's navy should foreshadow a Russian advance on Constantinople. Subsequent events showed these fears to be justified. Tsar Nicholas I, who, in consequence of a military revolt, succeeded his brother Alexander I on December 1st, 1825, declared, in his capacity as Protector of the Balkan Christian populations, war on Turkey, and set his Armies in movement towards the Bosphorus. Nicholas, as Frederic William III's son-in-law, relied on Prussia's benevolent neutrality and also confided in that friendship with France, which his predecessor had been at such pains to cultivate. Charles X, Louis XVIII's brother and successor, justified the Tsar's confidence for sound reasons. France and Russia mutually needed each other. Charles X's Minister, Villèle, renewed Choiseul's old Mediterranean policy, only by different methods. Conformably with the altered balance of forces, Villèle saw no longer any reason for sparing those Barbary States which Choiseul, in the eighteenth century, refrained from attacking so as to avoid a conflict with Turkey. Under existing circumstances, sure of Russia's moral support, France did not hesitate to seize an insult to her Consul as a pretext for armed intervention in Algeria. Not feeling strong enough to re-embark on a struggle for the Rhine, she turned her attention to the conquest of the North African coast.

Not for the first time did French troops tread this soil. Charles X only needed to follow, in the nineteenth century, a tradition already created by St. Louis's crusade and Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition. Neither did the Algerian campaign signify an abandonment of France's historic Rhenish policy. But her power had been too greatly weakened, and that of Russia too greatly increased, for France to be able to face again the whole European continent alone. Mere vassals no longer sufficed her; she required henceforth allies on a footing of equality. Francis I's days returned, and Tsar Nicholas I now played the part of Soliman the Magnificent. There being no longer a hostile Emperor Charles V, the Franco-Russian understanding could be regarded as directed against any Power attempting to bar the way to Russia's expansion in the East or France's expansion in the West. Russia threatened Persia, announced her protectorate over the Balkans, and openly claimed Byzance; whereas France secured a footing in Algeria, and continued her efforts to assure French hegemony in Belgium and on the Rhine.

In 1827 Tsar Nicholas wrested Erivan from Persia. On July 6th of that same year he concluded a treaty with Great Britain and France, by virtue of which, on April 28th, 1828, he declared war on Turkey with the object of assisting Greece to recover her independence. A Russian Army crossed the Caucasus and took Erzerum; another traversed the Balkans and appeared before Adrianople. Russia cast threatening shadows over the entrances to South-Eastern Asia.

When France despatched an expeditionary corps to Morea, simultaneously with Russia advancing on Adrianople, the outlines of a new European coalition became clearly visible. Whilst Germany remained wrapt in sleep, Great Britain saw her world supremacy menaced—this time on land, on the isthmus of Suez and the overland route to India through Persia and Afghanistan—alike by Russia's expansion in Asia and by France's Mediterranean policy.

French statesmen and generals were quick to perceive the opportunity thus afforded them. Chateaubriand, who had meanwhile gone over to the Opposition, pleaded that France should once more resume her struggle for the Rhine. Adolphe Thiers had just concluded, in 1827, the publication of his *Histoire de la Révolution française*, the ten volumes of which

were devoted to drawing public attention to the greatness of a movement that not only freed France from the trammels of the *ancien régime*, but gave to her the Rhine's left bank. And French opinion, responsive to the call of its most illustrious guides, unreservedly demanded the return of "France's river." Prince Polignac, Villèle's successor, did not feel strong enough to back-up this demand by force of arms, but he nevertheless submitted a plan for the redistribution of European territory to Nicholas I's approbation. A more phantastic scheme has never been propounded. It allotted Asia Minor and Walachia to Russia, Serbia and Bosnia to Austria-Hungary, Holland to Prussia, the Dutch colonies to Great Britain, Flanders to Saxony; it proposed the union of Thrace, Thessaly, and Greece under the Prince of Orange's sceptre; while it awarded the Southern Palatinate, the Saar basin, Luxemburg, and Belgium to France.

Russia's victorious advance, only brought to a standstill before Adrianople by British protests, put a rapid end to these illusions. But if the project came to nought, France's claim to the Rhine frontier and Belgium remained. The July Revolution, which overthrew Charles X and the elder branch of the French Bourbons, in nowise solved the continuity of French foreign policy. On July 8th, 1830, French troops entered Algiers; on July 29th a revolution broke out in Paris; and on August 9th Louis-Philippe was proclaimed "constitutional King." Palmerston, who controlled British policy, alarmed by France's activity in the Mediterranean and the revival of the Belgian question, declined an alliance with the July Monarchy, which adhered in every respect to its predecessor's course of action abroad. Tsar Nicholas I, albeit for different motives, likewise turned a cold shoulder on a constitutional *régime* which abandoned the principle of legitimacy.

The liberal movement to which Charles X fell a victim spread to other European countries, notably Poland and Belgium. The Kingdom of the United Netherlands, created in Vienna in 1814, burst asunder. But France, finding herself isolated, did not risk an attempt to annex Belgium. Louis-Philippe had to content himself with safeguarding French influence by his daughter's marriage to Prince Leopold of Coburg, independent Belgium's first sovereign, and with the

dismantling of those fortresses on the Franco-Belgian frontier repaired by Wellington.

Fate nevertheless proved favourable to France on this occasion also. Since William of Orange refused to sacrifice the unity of the Netherlands and endeavoured to crush Belgium's resistance by force, the Powers again delegated France as their mandatory. French troops consequently marched into Belgium and took Antwerp, compelling Holland's Army to retreat towards the Rhine's estuary.

The newly created Belgian State stretched from the North Sea to Luxemburg, and thus became guardian of the gate of the Scheldt, the line of the Sambre, the crossings over the Meuse, and the passes through the Ardennes. Hence it inevitably played the part of buffer State of an "all round" glacis. Whichever Power succeeded in dominating it, in obtaining its assistance, necessarily gained a marked advantage over any adversary, alike in the Channel, on the estuaries of the large rivers, and on the Lower Rhine.

During six years the Powers debated the new State's international *status*. Great Britain showed an inclination to see Belgium included in the German Confederation, but Prussia short-sightedly declined Lord Palmerston's offer to this effect, and proposed instead a joint guarantee for Belgium's independence by all the Powers interested. Sure of her influence in the new State, France willingly accepted Prussia's suggestion—all the more so as she had no reason for desiring, at the very moment when she was busy with the conquest of Algeria and her fleet was cruising in the Levant, complications on her north-eastern frontier.

In 1839 Egypt declared herself independent of Turkish rule, and France logically espoused the former's cause. But since Russia, Austria, and Prussia supported Turkey, whilst Lord Palmerston took the opportunity of annexing Aden, France found herself isolated at the ensuing London Conference for the first time when important questions of international reorganization were under discussion. Thiers, Louis-Philippe's Premier, had to give way, thus averting a European war in which France would have been without an ally. This diplomatic rebuff stung French sensitiveness to the quick, and caused the nation, whose imperialist tendencies could not be satisfied by mere colonial expansion, to concentrate

its attention with renewed energy on the Rhine. The Press, which exerted great influence since the advent of the July Monarchy, declared openly in favour of a restoration of France's "natural" frontiers, denouncing the Peace of Paris as an act of mutilation, and recalling the glorious era associated with the Revolution and Empire. The theory arose of France's right to compensation on the Rhine whenever French diplomacy suffered a set-back elsewhere.

But if France thus renewed, about 1841, her demand for the Rhine's left bank, the echo awakened in Germany by this French offensive showed that national feeling had meanwhile become a factor to be reckoned with in the thirty-eight States forming the German Confederation. This time the perennial struggle for the Rhine did not manifest itself as a physical collision between warring hosts, but as a gigantic conflict of minds, which revealed, not only the antagonism between French will to power and German will to self-assertion, but also the fundamental, irreconcilable divergency between French and German conceptions of the world—the elementary incompatibility of two essentially heterogeneous ways of thinking and feeling.

In his pamphlet *1815 et 1840* Edgar Quinet passionately denounced France's withdrawal from the Rhine as a betrayal of the cause of humanity. Nicholas Becker retorted with his poem *Sie sollen ihn nicht haben, den freien deutschen Rhein*, which elicited from Victor Hugo the reply :—

Nous l'avons eu, votre Rhin allemand,
Il a tenu dans notre verre.

Max Schneckenburger composed *Die Wacht am Rhein*, which became a German national song. Louis Blanc, on the other hand, declared that "for France the Rhenish question is not one of territorial aggrandizement, but of national defence" ; and Proudhon described France's historic Rhenish policy as "the mission of Hugues Capet and all his successors." While poets and philosophers of either nation thus tilted against each other, Moltke the Strategist crystallized, from a military standpoint, the problem in the words : "If France should decline to respect the Treaties of 1814 and 1815 . . . we must unite in an unshakable resolution not to sheath our sword . . . until she has repaid us her whole debt." And

whilst the French General Staff prepared its maps for a new Rhine campaign, Prussian troops marched into the valley of the Moselle and encamped, ready for defensive action, on the Saar.

But no complications ensued. Louis-Philippe dismissed Thiers, calmed the excitement, and settled the Near Eastern conflict by means of a compromise. France participated in the Dardanelles Agreement (July 1841) and saved appearances. In 1844 Marshal Bugeaud defeated the united Algerians and Moroccans under Abd-el-Kader at Isly, and a French fleet bombarded Tangier and Mogador, thereby firmly securing France's position in North Africa.

French expansion only suffered a brief interruption in consequence of the new revolution in Paris in February 1848, which swept the July Monarchy from power. Louis-Philippe would not have been overthrown so easily had he been more successful in his foreign policy. Under the circumstances, however, all parties deserted him, and he fled to make room for the Second Republic, which established itself after bitter fighting in the streets of the capital, in which the *bourgeoisie* was finally victorious over the *Quatrième État*. General Cavaignac soon found himself superseded as dictator by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the great Emperor's nephew. By a *coup d'état*, carried out on December 2nd, 1851, Louis Napoleon seized the reins of power, and shortly afterwards proclaimed himself Emperor under the title of Napoleon III. The French nation's collective strength was thus again concentrated in a single hand, and it needed no extraordinary prescience to foretell that the struggle for the Rhine would soon recover its old acuity.

But Napoleon III changed fronts twice before tackling that time-honoured problem. And first of all, to revenge himself on Tsar Nicholas I for having forsaken friendship to France, he joined Great Britain in the Crimean War, although the interests of the Western Allies were far from harmonious. The fall of Sebastopol weakened, but by no means paralysed, Russia; consequently Great Britain failed to accomplish her war aim, and requested France to continue hostilities. Napoleon, on the other hand, was quite satisfied with an achievement which considerably enhanced the Second Empire's prestige, and gave back to the Paris Government its

liberty of action in Western Europe in the event of Russia reverting to her former friendly attitude towards France. Nevertheless he did not immediately reject Great Britain's request, but declared himself willing to continue hostilities on condition Great Britain consented, in her turn, to a rectification of the Rhenish frontier.

Knowing that France's return to the Rhine would upset the whole existing order of things in Europe and endanger Great Britain's world interests, his Britannic Majesty's Government declined to accede to this suggestion, and preferred to renounce attempting to paralyse Russia sooner than facilitate an extension of France's western boundaries. Under these conditions the conclusion of peace with St. Petersburg was assured, and, for the first time, Paris welcomed a great European Congress within its walls. The Congress decided to confine Russia's fleet to the Black Sea and prohibit its passing through the Dardanelles. Great Britain, for her part, renounced her "right to piracy" and consented to the abolition of "paper" blockades. Thus the struggle for the Dardanelles was again interwoven with the struggle for the Rhine, and the settlement of the latter once more relegated to an indefinite future.

The Congress of Paris marked the recovery, by France, of her predominance in the European Concert, and Napoleon III appeared there as arbitrator of Europe's destinies. The new Peace Treaty—signed by France, Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, and Turkey—effaced the memory of the Vienna Congress. Sardinia had officially a voice in the matter; and the avowed ultimate aim of her King, Vittorio Emmanuele, and of Vittorio Emmanuele's Minister, Count Cavour, was Austria's expulsion from Lombardy and Italy's unification. Hence even if the Treaty of Paris could be presumed to signify—which it did not—a settlement of the Near Eastern question, it by no means implied a consolidation of European peace. Napoleon III continued to pursue the course he had mapped out for himself. Having wreaked vengeance on Russia, he turned his attention to the Italian problem and sought, by applying the principle of nationality to the Apennine Peninsula, to force Austria back across the Julian Alps, doubtless inspired in his endeavours by those revolutionary circles to which, in turbulent days of youth,

he had himself belonged. But behind all the problems occupying Napoleon's attention stood the Rhine, together with his unswerving determination to restore France's predominance on either of its banks.

In 1857 the Emperor confided to the British Prince Consort that he needed the Rhine's left bank in order to consolidate his own rule. In the hope of ultimately realizing this aim, he joined Italy in her war against Austria in 1859. As compensation for aiding Cavour to recover Piedmont and Lombardy, France received Nice and Savoy from Vittorio Emmanuele. The German Confederation took no part in a war which was Austria's sole concern, and which she lost on the battlefields of Solferino and Magenta, thereby paying for her historic abandonment of the Rhine by the cession of Lombardy to Italy.

After dictating peace to Austria at Villafranca, participating with Great Britain in an expedition to Pekin, and annexing Annam, Napoleon's restless ambition caused him to become involved in 1861 in the Mexican adventure, which cost Maximilian of Habsburg his life. But in his extravagant dream of a transoceanic Latin Empire he miscalculated—as his illustrious uncle had done—the limits set him by Nature, with the result that he found his hands bound at the precise moment when the question of dualism in Germany became acute and the Bismarckian era there dawned.

Ever since Waterloo the yearning for political unity in Germany had constantly increased. If, during the Napoleonic wars, the German people became painfully conscious of their disunion, the War of Liberation irresistibly developed within them the consciousness of their strength. Internal feuds combined with dangers threatening from outside to bring home to Germans the fundamental necessity of solidarity. Nevertheless their hope of a "Greater Germany," already disappointed in 1814, was again dashed to the ground in 1848. Reaction triumphed a second time. But the events of 1848, the fall of Metternich's system, the tragic spectacle afforded by an idealistic but impotent National Assembly in Frankfurt, were destined to bear fruit in later years.

Bismarck's *début* as statesman took place under the auspices of a reactionary *régime* at a highly critical moment of Europe's destinies. The principle of nationality acted as

a powerful ferment. Its application brought Italy her long-desired unity. Under its influence the Balkan Christian populations slowly but surely progressed towards national independence. And it could not fail to affect public opinion in Germany, still imprisoned in the strait-waistcoat of the German Confederation, which, far from being a symbol of German unity, proved an incomparable instrument for perpetuating German discord.

France's historic Rhenish policy based on Germany's disunion, and Napoleon could not apply the principle of nationality to Germany without endangering France's hold on Alsace. To meet this obvious objection he resorted to another argument—namely, that the interests of Alsace were best served by her incorporation with France. Thus he thought to reconcile the principle of nationality advocated by him in other cases with the doctrine of France's "natural frontiers," and by means of this paradox to refuse Germany what he willingly granted Italy. He declared himself ready, however, to admit Germany's division into an Austrian, a Prussian, and a French sphere respectively, and untiringly pursued his favourite "policy of compensation" with the well-defined aim of obtaining possession again of Belgium and the Rhine's left bank. His entanglement in the Mexican adventure alone prevented him ordering his Armies to advance on the Sambre and the Saar when, in 1864, the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein declared themselves autonomous, whereupon the German Confederation, headed by Austria and Prussia, became involved in a war with Denmark, thus leaving Germany's north-western flank open.

For the first time for many centuries Europe now witnessed the spectacle of German troops taking the field without any foreign Power intervening. But, as is invariably the case at every decisive turning-point in history, the situation was full of danger. The defeat of the Danes roused, not France, but Great Britain, to diplomatic action with a view to stopping the Austro-Prussian advance, and both Paris and St. Petersburg were content to leave the initiative in this matter to London. Bismarck had assured himself of Russia's benevolence by his Russophil attitude during the Polish insurrection of 1863. He cleverly checkmated Napoleon by skilfully drawn-out negotiations regarding the latter's policy

of compensation. And when Great Britain, reversing her traditional policy in the interests of her maritime supremacy, sought to stop the German Armies' onward march, she encountered the adamantine will of Prussia's far-sighted and purposeful reorganizer. Bismarck intended neither to cede Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, nor to admit of Austria's gaining influence in the Baltic, nor to splitter-up Germany still more by creating yet another Confederate State, nor to submit to the dictation of a European conference. He aimed at winning back for Prussia her freedom of action and redeeming her from the effects of that attitude of renunciation and servility which had characterized her ever since Frederic the Great's death.

The Peace of Vienna, which on October 30th, 1864, put an end to the Danish War and placed Lauenburg, Holstein, and Schleswig in the hands of the German Allies, was the first Peace Treaty in which German States participated freely without foreign interference. If it led directly, on the one hand, to a crisis within the German Confederation—a crisis, the deeper causes of which lay embedded in the constitution of that Confederation itself, in Prussia's rise to power, and in the historic rivalry between Austria and Prussia—it also heralded the early eclipse of France's unquestioned ascendancy in Europe, an ascendancy acquired by her at the Paris Congress after the Crimean War.

In 1865 Bismarck visited Napoleon at Biarritz to discuss the German problem with the French sphinx. He returned to Berlin convinced that the Emperor did not intend concluding a definite alliance with Austria, and that Napoleon would await the propitious moment when both German States were exhausted by the war to put forward France's claim to compensation. As a matter of fact, Napoleon contemplated seizing the opportunity thus afforded him to create a Rhenish buffer State under French patronage.

Such being the case, Bismarck's course was clear. Napoleon must be left no time to throw his weight into the balance so as to be able to advance a demand for compensation. This paramount consideration dictated Prussian strategy to the exclusion of any other in the inevitable war, engendered by the historic rivalry between Austria and Prussia, which broke out in 1866.

It was the first great German internece conflict in modern times in which neither France, nor Great Britain, nor Russia participated. Bismarck, as we said, had secured Russia's benevolent neutrality by his policy towards Poland; and Austria still smarted too greatly under the loss of Lombardy to enter openly into an alliance with France. Napoleon adopted an attitude of watchful waiting. As for Italy, she gladly took advantage of the situation to ally herself with Prussia with a view to reconquering Venice.

Frederic the Great's maxim of "short and lively wars" found its application in the Austro-Prussian duel. For only provided Prussia succeeded within a short space of time in vanquishing Austria and the latter's German Allies, and in concluding a peace based on broad and durable foundations, could Napoleon's hope of appearing as mediator on the scene to his own advantage be frustrated, and the decision to settle the vexed problem of German dualism by force of arms redound to Germany's benefit. Napoleon proved himself on this occasion a master of cunning subterfuge. He promised Prussia neutrality, whilst at the same time granting Austria a loan of 265,000,000 francs and concluding with Emperor Francis Joseph a secret pact guaranteeing Austria, in the event of victory, Schleswig, on condition that she ceded Venice to Italy and consented to the establishment of an "autonomous Rhenish State." For no one—and least of all Napoleon—doubted the superiority of Austria in league with Saxony, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and the South German States, over Prussia.

The crisis within the German Confederation—that impotent organization of German States which enjoyed the worthless guarantee of the signatories of the Vienna Treaty—thus came to a head. The now inevitable war had to decide once more Germany's fate and that of the Rhineland. Such a development had been rendered inevitable ever since the day when Austria definitely turned aside from the Rhine and Prussia again concentrated her attention on it. Since the idealistic attempt to reconstruct the old German Empire on a liberal and "Greater German" basis failed in 1848, owing to opposition of the sovereigns, particularism of the individual States, and lack alike of material resources and

political fitness, the question became one of the internal balance of power in Germany herself.

Under these circumstances the strategic decisions to be taken were inevitably determined by political considerations. Prussia had no choice but to try and prevent, by a bold and rapid stroke, the concentration of the enemy's scattered forces, and to engage her strongest adversaries—namely, Austria and Saxony—in Bohemia's plains, before Bavaria and Swabia could come to their help. Prussia's advance on Bohemia—the first great advance in history to be carried out by means of railways—followed immediately on the declaration of war on June 14th, 1866. William I placed the strategic direction of his forces in Helmuth von Moltke's hands.

The war lasted barely three weeks. After Austria's decisive defeat at Sadowa on July 3rd, Bismarck proposed to William I that Prussia should enter into negotiations with the enemy.

The news of Sadowa caused something approaching dismay in Paris. And rightly so, for—as witness her secret treaty of June 12th with Austria—France had confidently reckoned on an Austrian victory, and Napoleon now found his fondly cherished hope of an autonomous Rhenish State deceived.

By putting an end to German dualism, Sadowa simultaneously transformed the entire aspect of European policy. The direction of affairs henceforth belonged to the statesman capable of taking advantage of the new situation. A great diplomatic game began. Napoleon would gladly have intervened, but encountered Bismarck's resolute resistance. The "guarantor of the Peace of Westphalia" thus found himself excluded from that German house into which France had so long been accustomed to enter at will. Since Napoleon could not resort to force, at any rate for the time being, and since neither Russia nor Great Britain manifested the slightest inclination to interfere in the German quarrel, France was not in a position to claim, at the bayonet's point, a cession of German territory on the Rhine's left bank as the price of an intervention imposed on an unwilling Germany. Instead of the traditional Prussian squire, France now saw herself suddenly confronted by a German statesman.

The pride of the Habsburgs nevertheless procured Napoleon a success gratifying to his and France's *amour propre*, and

which served to cover his first retreat before Bismarck. Francis Joseph could not bring himself to transfer personally Venice to Italy, whose Army had been routed at Custoza and whose fleet had been sent to the bottom of the sea at Lissa. He therefore entrusted that province to the French Emperor as trustee, and the Italian nation, unlucky on the battlefield, received it from Napoleon's hands. This gesture undoubtedly strengthened Napoleon's position in the diplomatic game, and afforded him a welcome opportunity of endeavouring to mediate between Prussia and the South German States other than Austria.

France declared her readiness to leave Prussia to reorganize conditions in North Germany as she pleased, demanding, in return for France's recognition of a North German Confederation, the creation of a similar Confederation in South Germany. Again did the shadow of a tripartite division of Germany—in the North under Prussian, in the East under Austrian, in the South under French, hegemony—become clearly discernible against the horizon. Bismarck met this French move by concluding peace with Austria, a peace to which William I reluctantly consented on July 26th.

Once Austria and Saxony retired without territorial loss from the field, thus enabling Prussia's Army to wheel round towards the West, the curtain rose on a new scene in the drama. Three days later France advanced a fresh claim, and demanded the cession of Rhenish territory in return for her non-intervention in the German struggle and her acquiescence in the rearrangement of German political conditions. Under the pretext of "securities," Napoleon demanded the Saar basin, the Palatinate, and that part of Hesse situated on the Rhine's left bank. Bismarck thus found himself confronted by a resumption of the French diplomatic offensive. But although aware that France, three weeks after Sadowa, was even less able to enforce such claims than at the outset of the Austro-Prussian War, he knew also that the highly critical situation could at any moment be changed by a European intervention, and that Prussia must garner her harvest before the guarantors of the old order of things awoke from their semi-slumber to convene a Congress.

Since Austria, eliminated from the German Empire, henceforth pursued her own interests in the Near East, and since

Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and the Free City of Frankfurt had been annexed by Prussia, it only remained for the latter to conclude peace with her remaining South German opponents. Bismarck now took the second great step in the unification of Germany by proposing to the South German States an alliance in lieu of all cessions of territory. Thus the "line of the Main," which had so long separated North and South in Germany, lost its importance. Bavaria retained her territory on the right bank; France, on the other hand, saw Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, and Hesse united in alliance with Prussia, instead of being, as heretofore, merely France's vassals dependent on French good will.

France had no alternative but to execute a second diplomatic retreat. Napoleon reduced his claims and sought an alliance with his adversary in the hope of thereby recovering the Rhenish frontier of 1792. On August 29th, 1866, the French Ambassador in Berlin, Count Benedetti, made written proposals to Bismarck whereby France demanded for herself, in exchange for an alliance, Landau, Saarbrücken, Luxemburg, and Belgium. Bismarck prudently reserved his answer without binding himself.

Another pause in the diplomatic game ensued. Prussia's rise to power, with its resulting consolidation of Germany, far from diminishing France's craving for hegemony, only served to strengthen it anew. Conscious of the fact that France's European supremacy bases on the Rhine, French policy reverted to its tradition by concentrating itself on this river. France had not succeeded in driving Prussia and Bavaria from the Rhine; she had failed to acquire Belgium and transform the whole Rhine basin into a French glacis, as in former times. But Napoleon III none the less brought her nearer the accomplishment of these permanent and ultimate aims. And the prestige won by him on the battle-fields of the Crimea and Lombardy, in Africa and Asia, could not be maintained in the long run unless he realized those aims. Instinctively aware of this truth, the French nation demanded ever more imperiously the renewal of the historic struggle.

Napoleon himself knew that the decisive hour could not long be postponed. Hence he directed his efforts towards achieving his great object without exposing his own dynasty

to the risks inseparable from a war. The newly formed North German Confederation had scarcely come into existence, when French diplomacy commenced spinning new threads. Napoleon opened negotiations with the King of Holland in view of obtaining possession of Luxemburg, a territory united to the Netherlands by personal union. William III of Holland expressed his readiness to part with the Grand Duchy, but stipulated that Prussia should give her consent to the transaction. Bismarck hereupon declared that Prussia alone had the right to keep a garrison in the fortress of Luxemburg, a right guaranteed her in 1839, and that he could not move a finger with a view to bartering the land to France. This declaration roused French public opinion to fury. But Napoleon did not feel himself strong enough, this time either, to run the chance. His War Minister, Marshal Niel, stated that three years must elapse before the French Army could be ready for war. But as the French Press none the less continued its warlike propaganda, Bismarck openly proclaimed the fact that North and South Germany would be found indissolubly united in the event of an attack. At the same time, recognizing that the question of Luxemburg weighed but very lightly in the balance of Germany's fate, he consented to submit it to a Conference of Ambassadors held in London in May 1867, thereby shelving the incident. The Conference decided to neutralize Luxemburg and dismantle the fortress.

France celebrated this result as a diplomatic victory. As a matter of fact, the solution was equally agreeable to Napoleon and Bismarck. France needed the respite thus obtained to make her final preparations for a war of aggression. Germany likewise needed it to consolidate her internal conditions and perfect her defensive armour. Shortly afterwards Napoleon again changed his course and opened negotiations with Belgium, whom he sought to induce to enter into a Customs Union with France and to sell the latter her railways. The negotiations broke down; Great Britain vetoed the projected Customs Union, whilst Belgium feared Prussia's protest in the matter of the railways. This failure dealt a severe blow at Napoleon's entire policy, since Great Britain now resumed her historic position on the Belgian frontier.

The same year (1867) witnessed the first great World Exhibition of the industrial age, to visit which all the European sovereigns travelled to Paris. It also witnessed, on November 3rd, the skirmish at Mentana, where French troops defeated Italian volunteers and expelled them from the Papal State, thereby restoring Rome to the Pope and retaining for France her traditional rôle as protectress of the Holy See. When the victor of Mentana, General Faidy, attributed, in his report, the French success to the excellence of the new chassepot rifle, public opinion in Paris accepted this as a favourable omen of greater victories to come. With enhanced confidence it looked forward to the approaching day of *revanche* for Sadowa.

It was high time for this day to dawn, for Napoleon's star was obviously on the wane. The Emperor was growing old, and, moreover, suffered from a very painful biliary calculus; and his clearness of mind and power of decision frequently abandoned him at critical moments. The opposition of those Radicals who had never forgiven the *coup d'état* of 1851 grew daily more violent. Vainly did Napoleon endeavour to conciliate his adversaries by "liberalizing" his hitherto absolutist *régime*. He knew that no internal reforms could possibly guarantee his son the Imperial Throne if he himself did not bequeath the Rhine as a legacy to the French nation.

Thus neither sickness, nor increasing worries at home, nor the Roman question, could deter Napoleon's attention from the Rhine. He conceived the plan of placing Rome under the protection of Queen Isabella of Spain, of concluding secret alliances with Austria and Italy, and then, relieved of all external anxieties, embarking on new negotiations with Germany concerning the Rhine. In this case he would be able to throw the whole weight of a diplomatically strong position into the balance. Personally he did not seek war, but he urgently needed the triumph which his own nation imperiously required of him. The waves of national excitement rose ever higher in France, and the Paris Press could be found unambiguously declaring that German unity constituted a menace to the world. Émile de Girardin recalled the Great Napoleon's words: "Without the Rhine departments and Belgium, France would be nothing." And we

find for the first time in a French publication entitled *Nos frontières du Rhin*—written by an Alsatian named Charles Müller—the quite exact assertion that the entire valley of the Rhine, from Strasbourg to Cologne, forms an indivisible unity. But the author concludes, not that Strasbourg should be restored to Germany, but that Cologne should be ceded to France. In Germany, on the other hand, the conviction gained ground that the Rhine was once more imperilled, but that this time the struggle for its possession would find all sections of the German nation united under a single flag in its defence. Bismarck's North German Confederation developed rapidly into the fundament of a rejuvenated and powerful German Empire.

The idea of German unity constantly assumed more concrete shape, and soon took the form of a German Zollverein. The line of the Main, in which France was wont to see a political line of demarcation between North and South Germany, no longer existed. The Germans now understood that the Main constitutes a natural link uniting Upper and Lower Germany, and connecting Rhine and Elbe. The words of the Swabian Deputy Volk, who, on the Zollverein being created, fervently exclaimed: "Spring has at last made its entry into Germany," most aptly characterized the progress realized by political development there at that time.

Napoleon's plan to entrust Spain with the protection of Rome against an Italian attack, and to withdraw the French garrison from the Eternal City to the Rhine, collapsed on the threshold of 1870. A revolution overthrew Queen Isabella's throne and compelled her to seek refuge in Paris. The decisive diplomatic game began. After numerous unsuccessful *démarches* at other princely courts, the Spanish revolutionaries secretly offered the Spanish Crown to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, son-in-law of Ferdinand, titular King of Portugal. Prince Leopold himself belonged to the Catholic family of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. Bismarck favoured this offer and prevailed on Prince Karl Anton, Leopold's father, to accept it as a patriotic duty incumbent on the House of Hohenzollern.

On receiving news of this candidature, Napoleon immediately instructed his Ambassador to protest against the proposed linking-up of Spanish and Prussian dynastic interests,

whilst he himself set up Ferdinand of Portugal as rival candidate. The question of the Spanish Succession became forthwith a question of power. After considerable hesitation, Prince Leopold accepted the candidature offered him, and on June 21st, 1870, King William of Prussia, in his capacity as head of the family, gave his consent to it. Napoleon sought to thwart the plan by obliging Queen Isabella to abdicate, and by putting forward the candidature of her twelve-year-old son Alfonso.

Secret negotiations had proceeded thus far, when Prince Leopold's Spanish partisans published the news of his candidature. On July 3rd the news spread through Paris like wildfire. The long-pent-up national excitement could no longer be continued. The Olivier Cabinet, in office since December 1869, was forced to act. On July 6th the Duc de Grammont, Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared in the Chamber that whilst the Spaniards were free to choose their own King, France could never admit the right of any foreign Power to disturb the European balance of power to France's detriment, nor to imperil the honour and interests of France by placing on Charles V's throne a Prince belonging to its own reigning dynasty. France, continued the Minister, hopes that the sagacity of the German people and the friendship of the Spanish nation will prevent such a possibility arising. Otherwise, he concluded, the French Government, confident of the support of Parliament and the nation, will perform its duty without weakness or hesitation.

When the Duc de Grammont delivered this speech, Charles V's empire, on which the sun never set, had long since disappeared. Spain did not even possess anything like the power she enjoyed when Louis XIV sent for his grandson Philip of Anjou to inform him that the Most Christian King's Majesty had deemed fit to accept the Spanish heritage. At that time France remained silent concerning the European equilibrium. This principle, first formulated for reasons of her own by Great Britain, was not adduced as an argument—much less as an immutable statute of international law—by a French Minister until July 3rd, 1870. France did not make use of it until she thought her European hegemony menaced, until she feared that her advance towards the Rhine, which for centuries had been opposed by all European

States interested in maintaining the balance of power, would again be interrupted at the psychological moment. France's protest, as voiced by Grammont, appeared as an unveiled threat—nay, as a challenge. This general impression produced by it was strengthened, when, on July 9th, Count Benedetti appeared by order of his sovereign before King William in Bad Ems and demanded that the King should make use of the right vested in him as head of the family to forbid Prince Leopold accepting the candidature.

From his Pomeranian country seat Bismarck watched the storm gathering, and hastened to Berlin so as to be prepared for all emergencies. But without waiting to consult him, King William decided to inform Count Benedetti in Ems on July 11th that although his Majesty would not request Prince Leopold to withdraw his candidature, he would approve a voluntary renunciation of it by the Prince. Perhaps King William himself did not feel quite reassured as to the advisability of his scarcely veiled retreat; in this case he must have been relieved when, on the following day, Prince Karl Anton published a statement in which he assumed full responsibility for his son's withdrawal.

Paris triumphed. Unfortunately the Emperor allowed himself to be persuaded by Grammont to push matters to extremes. Count Benedetti received instructions to demand from King William a guarantee that the Hohenzollern candidature would never again be put forward—or, if it should be, that King William would immediately veto it. The Ambassador carried out his instructions and laid this new demand before the Prussian monarch on July 13th, on the spa promenade in Ems. The cup overflowed. King William reminded Count Benedetti of their conversation of July 11th, and declared that he had nothing more to say in this matter. This ended the conversation, and the King resumed his walk.

Meanwhile Bismarck arrived in Berlin, where he summoned Roon and Moltke to see him. The first news from Ems—including the text of a "letter of apology" composed by Olivier and the Duc de Grammont, and which King William was to have signed—reached him in the afternoon of the same day (July 13th). King William's *entourage* had not ventured to lay that document before him. But Bismarck

knew that even without such a letter the French Government could claim a diplomatic success implying a humiliation for Prussia and Germany. In a distinctly dejected mood, Bismarck sat conferring with Roon and Moltke. Late in the evening came the news of Benedetti's new demand, to which King William declined to accede. Bismarck immediately recognized that France had exceeded the bounds permitted to a nation in diplomatic intercourse. Putting into evidence by means of a few strokes of his pencil the cardinal fact contained in the message—namely, King William's refusal to grant Count Benedetti a further audience—Bismarck communicated the telegram to the world. In this shape it sounded like a challenge. The question of the Spanish Succession faded into oblivion. France and Germany stood pitted against each other in elementary antagonism—France, who saw her claim to European hegemony menaced ; Germany, who strove to achieve her internal unity.

The publication of the so-called "Ems telegram" brought the historic struggle for the Rhine to a head. Divested of all accessories, shorn of all disguise, this centuries-old struggle now revealed itself to the world as the fundamental bone of contention between two great nations.

Falling back on the Duc de Grammont's statement in the Chamber, Bismarck declared to the British Ambassador in Berlin that France must give peaceful assurances to the Prussian Government if she wished to avoid further complications.

Never before had the world heard language of this sort in the mouth of a German statesman.

France could not recede. Her aim had been to diminish Prussia's prestige in Germany and the world at large, and any retreat on her part would have signified her admission of a diplomatic defeat. Napoleon felt his unstable throne shaken ; sure of the unanimous and enthusiastic support of French public opinion he decided to risk war. But this unfortunate sovereign, brooding over events and racked by the torture of an insidious disease, certainly did not embark on war with the same light heart as his Cabinet and the Paris boulevards. Napoleon was not more optimistic than Thiers, the leader of the Opposition, who reproached the Government for entering on war without any definite alliances. Napoleon

relied on a secret understanding between Italy and Austria, and also on the neutrality of the South German States. By means of a rapid thrust through the Gate of the Main and the valley of the Neckar he anticipated separating South Germany from the North, and appearing in Bavaria, whence he hoped to induce Austria to take her *revanche* for 1866. Then, in possession of the Palatinate and Luxemburg, he might reckon on imposing peace before North Germany could put her entire strength into the field. He even counted on being able, after a few favourable skirmishes, to come to an agreement with Prussia and solve the Belgian problem at England's expense. But these romantic dreams were destined to be rudely dispelled by the elementary clash of two nations, each inspired by a similar national feeling.

On July 19th, 1870, France declared war on Prussia and the North German Confederation. Knowing that the decisive hour had struck, in which France, according to Moltke's *obiter dictum*, should pay her "full debt," Bismarck did nothing to avoid an inevitable struggle. The French have held up Bismarck to obloquy as "the man of blood and iron," because he had the courage to declare in the Prussian Landtag, on September 30th, 1862, that the great problems of European politics could not be solved by mere speeches or even plebiscites, but only by blood and iron. For having said on January 27th, 1863, that the science of Government consists in compromises, the French have denounced Bismarck as an enemy of right, as trampling on all ideals of justice and equity. And yet, contemplated impartially, was it not almost an anachronism that France, Austria, Great Britain, Spain, Scandinavia, Russia, the United States, Holland, Switzerland—in short, by far the largest part of the civilized world—was it not an anachronism that all these countries—nay, Italy also—should have reached the ideal of political unity, whereas internal dissensions still tore Germany asunder? Verily could Bismarck not be held responsible for this state of things. Centuries too late Germany found the statesman capable of consolidating her power on its natural, national basis. Hence Bismarck appeared to a surprised Europe as the living incorporation of unscrupulous brutality—after Charles V, Richelieu, Mazarin, Louis XIV, Cromwell, William of Orange, Prince Eugene, Frederic the Great, Pitt the Elder

and the Younger, Peter the Great, Catherine, Washington, Cavour, and, last but most certainly not least, Napoleon, had accomplished their respective lifework. And yet destiny did but assign to Bismarck's genius the task of fulfilling the historic mission set to Germany on the Rhine since innumerable centuries.

For the first time in the historic struggle for that river Germany abandoned her purely defensive attitude. But we must not be blind to the fact that, this time also, the fight was of France's seeking. Shortly after the outbreak of war Bismarck published in *The Times* the draft treaty handed him by Count Benedetti on August 29th, 1866.¹ This publication produced the effect of a bombshell. Sympathy for France diminished palpably once it became known that already some four years previously Napoleon demanded Landau, the Saar, Luxemburg, and Belgium.

Great Britain recognized that France had by no means renounced the hope of conquering the Flemish glacis—that Germany was consequently once more engaged in fighting Albion's battles. Russia remembered that Prussia did not take advantage of the former's difficulties in the Crimea and Poland, and calculated that the present war would afford Russia a welcome opportunity of getting rid of the irksome restraints imposed by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. Italy eagerly anticipated the hour in which France would be compelled to recall the French garrison in Rome to the Rhine—thus enabling Young Italy to take possession of the Eternal City. As for Austria, she hesitated—despite the secret conventions concluded between Napoleon and Francis Joseph—to attack Prussia in the flank at the very moment when a wave of national enthusiasm overswept the whole of Germany and when German national songs were sung in the streets of Vienna. Austria, it is true, saw herself eliminated from the German Confederation; but she had been too discreetly treated by Bismarck to feel herself morally justified in intervening in what was undoubtedly Germany's national struggle against France. And even if she did so, it could only be at the imminent risk of a general European conflagration, since Prussia—who in 1849 had saved the Habsburg dynasty and earned no reward for her trouble—

¹ See p. 363.

could not view with indifference a shifting of the balance of power on the Continent to Austria's profit.

Thus the duel remained confined to France and Germany. Bismarck knew full well that under all circumstances must the French Armies be prevented from crossing the Rhine. Germany was still quivering from the effect of the convulsions produced by the conflict of 1866; her unity had not yet been put to the test in a national war; and the Great Powers—this Bismarck clearly realized—would not consent to remain neutral should the Franco-German War be unduly prolonged. Hence he realized also the vital necessity of waging the struggle with the greatest possible intensity beyond Germany's Rhenish frontier.

But if political considerations prompted Bismarck to a rapid conduct of the war, such a policy nevertheless encountered difficulties of a strategic nature. Thanks to the possession of Alsace, French Armies controlled the Badenese glacis; should they sally forth from their Alsatian base without delay—following the examples set by Turenne, Moreau, and Napoleon—they would be able to overrun the Black Forest, lay hold of the Neckar Gate, and reach the source of the Danube within a few hours.

This thought uncontestedly inspired the French plan of campaign. The Emperor knew that his Army was numerically inferior to that of North Germany; but he hoped to compensate for this numerical inferiority by rapidity of movement. He planned to cross the Rhine between Maxau and Hüningen, proclaim the Rhenish Confederation, and then, after a victorious battle, make peace with Prussia. Strategic and political considerations alike dictated such a plan. But the French Armies were not ready, and this time the South Germans were unwilling to accept the French yoke. Thus already at the beginning of the campaign Napoleon expiated the error committed by him during the controversy concerning the Spanish Succession a fortnight previously. On July 6th he and his Cabinet sought to bring about a diplomatic defeat for Prussia, in whom they rightly recognized the champion of a strong and self-conscious Germany firmly seated on the Rhine; although they had no intention of waging war, they actively discounted their anticipated triumph, and in the result found themselves obliged to throw down the gauntlet

on July 19th without being sufficiently prepared. France's will to war proved stronger than her ability to wage it.

Napoleon's original plan of campaign necessarily fell to pieces as soon as the French General Staff recognized the impossibility of taking the offensive on the right bank of the Rhine, owing to the fact that the concentration of French troops in Alsace required more time than had been foreseen, or than the Prussians were willing to grant. Under these circumstances the French High Command saw itself compelled to wage the fight on the left bank of the Rhine. This in itself did not constitute a ground for pessimism, for it thereby became possible to shorten the line of operations, which could be carried-out under the protection of the formidable fortresses of Strasbourg, Belfort, Metz, and Thionville. But although French troops concentrated around Metz and Strasbourg within a few days of the outbreak of war, they lacked all the requisites of an Army on the march. No reserves were available, and the commissariat proved lamentably deficient. Thus an Army of 250,000 men found itself obliged to await, between Metz and Mulhouse, the arrival of an enemy 384,000 strong who crossed the Rhine without resistance.

On July 30th the French Armies, divided into three groups, stood deployed before Metz, Saverne, and Mulhouse. Five corps, united near Metz under Marshal Bazaine, awaited the Emperor, who intended taking up his headquarters with this group, the aim of which was to advance against Saarbrücken and hold up the German advance on the Saar. A second Army Group under Marshal MacMahon was posted before the Saverne Pass, its object being to defend the latter, cover the right flank of the entire French Army, and simultaneously protect Strasbourg and Lower Alsace. A third Group under General Douay lay before Mulhouse, awaiting reinforcements from Dijon, to secure Upper Alsace and the Burgundian Gate.

On August 4th the advancing Germans defeated a French division under General Douay at Wissembourg. The remnants of this division retreated on Wörth, where, on August 6th, the first great encounter of the war took place and ended disastrously for the French. Marshal MacMahon's Army, unable henceforth to turn towards Metz, never-

theless succeeded in avoiding pursuit, crossed the Meuse, and continued its route through the Argonnes to Châlons-sur-Marne.

The battle of Wörth opened the gates of Alsace to the German invaders. Without offering further resistance, General Douay retreated from Mulhouse to Belfort, and thence to Châlons. The Burgundian Gate was likewise thrown open to the enemy.

On the same day on which Marshal MacMahon's Army suffered its disastrous defeat at Wörth, two German Armies advanced to attack General Frossard, whose corps had been despatched against Saarbrücken, and who awaited the assailants on the heights above Spichern. The German attack proved entirely successful, the French abandoning their positions and retreating under cover of darkness. But neither at Wörth nor at Spichern did the Germans undertake a strategic pursuit. Bazaine's troops withdrew on Metz, whilst MacMahon reorganized his forces at Châlons.

The Rhine campaign came to an end, the Moselle campaign commenced. Deserted by his lucky star, the Emperor sat in Metz. Bazaine retired on August 12th to the Moselle, and, after tentatively groping his way, retired in a westerly direction. On the same evening, yielding to the instances of Main Headquarters in Châlons, Napoleon relinquished the Supreme Command to Bazaine and left for Châlons. Obedient to the Empress Eugénie's commands, he did not venture to give instructions for a general retreat behind the Argonnes Passes and a continuation of the campaign in Champagne. Such a retreat—as the Empress and he well knew—would have cost him an already vacillating throne. Thus he saw himself faced with the alternative, either of his right wing being enveloped, and his Army consequently squeezed back on to the Belgo-Luxemburgian frontier, or of his Army and himself being locked-up in Metz. Under these circumstances he decided to place his fate in Bazaine's hands. Bazaine would gladly have retreated westwards, but before he could cross the Moselle his troops were attacked simultaneously at Vionville and Mars-la-Tour and thrown into confusion, whereupon he turned aside to the plateau of Metz. There he took up what he himself described as a *position inexpugnable*. But the Germans attacked and decisively defeated him in the

neighbourhood of St. Privat. Henceforth there remained no choice for him but to order a retreat on the fortress of Metz itself.

Meanwhile, obedient to instructions received from Paris, Marshal MacMahon left Châlons and withdrew *via* Reims towards the North in the vague hope either of being able to join hands with Bazaine's Army in the valley of the Meuse, or of relieving the Rhine Army by a successful break-through. MacMahon himself entertained no illusions as to the possible outcome of this flanking march, on which he embarked contrary to his own convictions. He well knew that there was no turning back. The sick Emperor, whose fate was inextricably bound up with that of his troops, accompanied him. At the head of an Army of 150,000 men, which had been patched together with difficulty, MacMahon traversed Champagne and descended into the valley of the Meuse. After having been attacked and suffering severe loss at Beaumont on August 30th, he determined to disregard the instructions received from Paris and beat a retreat. But it was too late, and the unfortunate Marshal found himself obliged to give battle to a greatly superior adversary under the walls of the fortress of Sedan.

On the outskirts of Rhenish territory on the left bank of the river, there where the French had triumphantly broken into Germany three hundred years previously, they now fought a decisive battle, on the issue of which the fate of Napoleon's dynasty and the outcome of this tremendous Franco-German duel depended. King William of Prussia himself commanded the two German Armies which entered into action on that historic First of September. Meanwhile a third German Army continued to hold Bazaine at Metz in its iron grip.

The battle of Sedan needs no description. Its result is known. Under the *débris* accumulated on the battlefield Napoleon's throne lay submerged. United Germany's victory constituted the spark which ignited the smouldering revolution in Paris. But the new-born Third Republic, begotten of disaster, did not dream of capitulation. As is invariably the case in French history, defeat produced the effect of cementing the unity of the French nation in a grim determination to continue the war at all costs.

The immediate consequence of this patriotic resolve was

a combined German advance on Paris. On September 17th German troops stood before the great city, and simultaneously Jules Favre arrived at German Headquarters as plenipotentiary of the Third Republic to negotiate terms of peace. "Not an inch of our territory, not a stone of our fortresses"—such were the proposals of this ambassador, contenting himself with offering victorious Germany, who for the first time in history had consciously undertaken the struggle for the Rhine as a national issue, a cash indemnity as compensation for her triumphant endeavours. On the one hand, Germany required—and reasonably required—payment to the full of what she rightly considered to be France's centuries-old debt; on the other, France refused, even *in extremis*, to renounce one particle of her centuries-old claims. Such elementary divergencies of view obviously rendered an understanding impossible *a priori*. On the blood-soaked fields of Wörth, Spichern, Mars-la-Tour, Gravelotte, and Sedan, Germany paid the price for the recovery of Alsace; and she was not prepared to pay such a price in vain. After many centuries the struggle for the Rhine now culminated in Germany's national struggle for the frontier of the Vosges, and the restoration of a German Empire which France had destroyed.

In this momentous moment, Bismarck, the creator of German unity, stood confronted by a tremendous task. He had no time to lose. France summoned all her children to a war of national defence conceived on the traditional principles of the great Revolution, and from this call to arms she derived new strength. Despite defeat, she stood erect and defiant. With the marvellous power of adaptation of a nation invariably capable of taking advantage of passing circumstances, she attributed her discomfiture exclusively to the Napoleonic *régime*, and appeared before the world clothed in a new garb as defender of civilization and champion of human liberty; and as such she sought new allies.

Europe waited in expectancy of coming events; and Bismarck knew that in the background of every European war lurked the ever-present danger of a European Congress.

The newly created National Assembly in Paris deputed Adolphe Thiers, Louis-Philippe's former Premier, who as historian had mighty contributed to create the Napoleonic legend, to visit the various European capitals with a view

to inducing the Great Powers to intervene on France's behalf in the interests of the "balance of power." The Powers did not respond to the invitation ; but they might repent of their attitude at any moment and place difficulties in Germany's way by proposing her attendance at a European Congress. Manifestly, Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Italy were attentively weighing Germany's victory in the balance of their respective interests. It was equally manifest that Germany served Great Britain's interests by driving the French from the Rhine. True, a collision between the mistress of the seas and the new Continental Power, which had so unexpectedly risen to greatness as a result of unforeseen victories, none the less loomed on the horizon as a potential, if still remote, possibility. For Britain's traditional doctrine of the balance of power is susceptible of more than one interpretation, since it must under all circumstances be reconciled with British interests. But Bismarck's eager eye grasped the situation. He knew that not only Germany's, but also Great Britain's, interests were served by the German victories at Wörth and Sedan—that these victories not only drove France from the Rhine, but also weakened her position in Egypt, which, since the opening of the Suez Canal, thanks to the genius of a Lesseps, only a year previously, had become the highway to India and the Far East. He likewise knew that the recovery of Alsace by Germany, by establishing at long last a European equilibrium, even if only an unstable one, did not collide with British interests, seeing that the new German Empire, far from being universalist in its tendencies, had neither a fleet, nor a world trade, nor an industry likely to compete with those of Great Britain. Bismarck knew that France still constituted Great Britain's most dangerous rival, and that if she continued hostilities, she could only do so thanks to her navy. Consequently the weakening of France had not yet progressed to such an extent as to cause uneasiness in London. For all these reasons Bismarck surmised that England would continue to adhere to her attitude of watchful waiting. And his surmise proved correct. England's attitude was also dictated by yet another reason—namely, by the hope of large profits accruing from the supply of food and munitions to France in the event of a prolongation of hostilities.

As for Russia, she riveted her gaze on the Dardanelles, and awaited the propitious moment for ridding herself of the shackles imposed on her by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. It required more than a compliant French Government to enable her to accomplish this, Great Britain being far more interested in confining Russia's fleet to the Black Sea than France, who had long since abandoned the policy which dictated her intervention in the Crimean War. Under these circumstances a strong Germany could not but be advantageous for the achievement of Russia's aims. Fully aware of this fact, Bismarck advised the Tsar to denounce the Treaty of Paris in so far as it concerned Russia—advice to which Russia tended a willing ear, and which she effectively followed on October 30th, 1870, thereby regaining her freedom of action in the Black Sea. Bismarck even went a step farther by rejecting the suggestion of an international Conference on this question. He thereby succeeded in calming the excitement aroused by Russia's declaration in London and Vienna.

Neither had Italy any reason to intervene, since she could only derive profit from the Franco-German conflict. The latter having obliged Napoleon to recall the French garrison stationed in Rome, Italian troops entered the Eternal City on September 20th and proclaimed it the historic capital of United Italy. As far as Italy herself was concerned, it is true, the refusal of Pope Pius IX to recognize this *fait accompli* produced other far-reaching consequences.

From Austria, the new German Empire had nothing to fear. Austria resigned herself to a new dualism and henceforth directed her policy towards the South-East.

Bismarck thus had time to accomplish the work he set out to perform. The internal political situation in France facilitated his task. For with whom could the victor of Sedan formally negotiate? With the captured Emperor, who expressly stated that he did not abdicate as Head of the State? Or with the Empress Regent, who took refuge with her son in England, but still considered herself to be Sovereign of France, and relied for the re-establishment of her authority on Bazaine's Army besieged in Metz? Or with the Republican Government in Paris, within which the forthcoming dictatorship of Léon Gambetta was already clearly foreshadowed, and which under his inspiration proclaimed a *levée*

en masse and its determination to raise new Armies for the purpose of national defence? None of these factors offered Bismarck any guarantee of security or peace.

But the respite thus afforded Bismarck could only be measured by days, and the final issue of the war was not yet definitely decided. True, it was highly improbable that the fortunes of war could now turn permanently against Germany; but a possibility of their proving unfavourable to her at a critical political juncture still remained. A single grain of sand might be capable of upsetting the balance of Bismarck's political apple-cart. The moment, indeed, was so critical that the historian who attempts to-day to judge impartially the situation as it then existed must content himself with showing how the great statesman, on whom Germany's destinies depended, solved the tripartite riddle of Germany's future, France's fate, and Europe's peace.

Bismarck insisted on the cession of Alsace and part of Lorraine. Already on August 31st, 1870, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* voiced his demand as follows: "What we require is greater security for Germany's frontiers. But this increased security can only be obtained by transforming the two fortresses which have hitherto menaced us into bulwarks of Germany's defence." Bismarck thus condensed the whole complex of difficult and controversial problems into a single politico-military demand for the cession to Germany of Strasbourg and Metz.

Two Powers, besides Prussia, were particularly interested in this demand—namely, France and Great Britain. The former emphatically rejected it. France claimed Alsace and Lorraine, the possession of which neither the first nor the second Treaty of Paris, in 1814 and 1815 respectively, had disputed her. The highly developed political instinct of the French nation precluded the acceptance of a surrender to which neither Louis XIV and his Capetian successors, nor the Revolution, nor either of the Napoleons, had ever consented. The newly formed Republican Government found itself in complete agreement on this point with its Monarchical and Imperial predecessors. Hence the question resolved itself into one of strength: nation was pitted against nation, sword against sword. The Rhine being the victor's reward.

For Great Britain, on the other hand, the Peace of

Utrecht (1713) constituted the basis of her relations with France. She was still convinced that French predominance on the Continent imperilled her own position as a world empire, that the European balance of power could only be definitely established by the destruction of France's hegemony on the Rhine. The London Press left no doubt about this point of view. The *Daily News* reminded its readers on August 20th that Louis XIV had robbed Alsace, and wrote : "The robbery may be covered by the statute of limitations, but this does not abolish Germany's right to reconquer the country"; and on September 8th it wrote : "France has invariably intervened in the internal affairs of Germany. . . . Whether Legitimists or Orleanists, Imperialists or Republicans, French statesmen have invariably been jealous of German unity and covetous of German soil." Thomas Carlyle, who was not only the apologist of Frederic the Great, but also the English commentator of the French Revolution, wrote to *The Times* : "For the last four hundred years no nation has ever had such malevolent neighbours as the French have been for Germany. Shameless, rapacious, insatiable, and implacable, the French have invariably been prepared to attack Germany. During all these centuries Germany has patiently endured France's attacks and encroachments. To-day she is victorious; and if she should neglect under these conditions to secure a frontier which guarantees her peace in the future, she would, in my conviction, be acting very foolishly."

Opinions in the British Cabinet were divided. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, was opposed to the return of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, such a "reconquest" being contrary to his democratic views; but he remained alone with this opinion, and had to content himself with demanding a guarantee for Belgium's security. The Belgian problem—which, considered from a historical standpoint, appears as an essential part of the Rhenish problem—completely dominated British policy in 1870. Since the dogma of Belgium's neutrality had not been enunciated in 1830 for Belgium's benefit, but for that of the Great Powers, and principally Great Britain, the latter was interested in maintaining it intact. And since Germany respected Belgium's neutrality, and likewise refrained from invading Luxemburg, Great Britain saw no cause to intervene. She therefore allowed events to take their course.

The new French Republic fought with true French valour. Paris defended itself with the energy of despair, and the provinces rose to assist the capital. But Bazaine capitulated on October 27th, thereby setting the Army of Prince Frederic Charles free. Bazaine's capitulation destroyed the last hope of relieving French Armies coming to the succour of Paris. France now threw her entire national strength into the struggle, and whilst her troops faced the victorious invaders in the field, her civilian population sought to strike down that invader in a merciless guerrilla campaign. The legend of peaceful France, whose only aim is to propagate the Rights of Man, who is the protagonist of individual freedom and popular sovereignty, revived with new and extraordinary intensity. The German invasion furnished the theme for the pathetic story of a peaceful nation's defence of its hearths against wanton and barbarous aggression. Viewed from this standpoint, the siege of Paris appeared as a symbolical struggle between the powers of darkness, on the one hand, and the "city of light" on the other. French propaganda sought to persuade the world that the most progressive nation in Europe was being attacked without the slightest provocation by a semi-civilized people led by reactionary and bloodthirsty despots. When heavy contributions were levied on French towns, when forests infested by French sharpshooters were cleared, when French villages flared up in the course of desperate hand-to-hand fights, when the Germans took severe repressive measures against *franc-tireurs*—the struggle for the Rhine assumed the dimensions of a French national war destined to leave indelible traces in the mind of coming French generations, enabling those generations to stigmatize Germany as an inhuman aggressor. The Germans have never succeeded in thus stigmatizing the French.

These preconceived ideas about Germany were destined to become at no distant date a formidable weapon against her. Meanwhile Gambetta's contagious enthusiasm fired the spirit of national resistance in France. But before long it became evident that this power of resistance was drawing to an end. On December 27th, 1870, the Germans commenced the bombardment of Paris, and the thunder of their guns reverberated throughout Europe. The bombardment of Paris,

as much a political as a military measure, proved Bismarck's inflexible determination not to allow the historic struggle between France and Germany to be submitted to a European Congress. Bismarck did not forget that the Congress of Vienna had neglected to demand the restitution of Alsace, and confirmed the one-sided French interpretation of the treaties of Westphalia and Utrecht. He therefore firmly resolved not to leave the problem of Germany's reconstruction to the dictation of a European Areopagus. For he knew that a nation must be able to shoulder its own responsibilities when the question arises of making good lost opportunities by force of arms.

On January 18th, 1871—while the last stubborn resistance of the French collapsed on the Loire, in the Jura Passes, before Cambrai, Belfort, and Paris—the German Princes proclaimed King William of Prussia as German Emperor in Versailles. Bismarck had succeeded, in the course of long and wearisome negotiations, conducted in masterly fashion, in finding a formula satisfactory to all concerned, and thanks to which Germany's unity became a living and palpable reality. His solution consisted in transforming what had been hitherto but a loose Confederacy of States into a single Confederate State. The German people, which although politically uneducated were profoundly penetrated by the sentiment of historic continuity, demanded that the Imperial Throne, outward and visible symbol of their unity, be restored. Conformably with this national demand, the German Princes requested on December 3rd, 1870, through the medium of King Louis II of Bavaria, King William of Prussia to assume the Imperial Crown. On January 14th, 1871, King William replied that he accepted this offer with the unshakable resolution of faithfully defending the rights and liberties of every German citizen, and on the express understanding that he would only wield the sword in defence of the German Empire. Three days later the world witnessed the historic scene in the Galerie des Miroirs in Versailles, when Bismarck, the genial architect of the new German unity, read the first Imperial Proclamation, and the Grand Duke Frederic of Baden called for cheers for the newly proclaimed German Emperor. The centuries-old German dream had at long last been realized. Ten days later an armistice was concluded.

Germany recovered the Rhine, and on the solid foundation constituted by that river's possession she simultaneously created a cisalpine and wholly national German Empire.

During centuries Germany had been engaged in a continuous struggle with a French neighbour animated by an insatiable desire for hegemony. With the Rhine's banks as her base of operations, France incessantly sought to establish her supremacy in Europe at the expense, not only of Germany, but also of Great Britain. The new German Empire gave a new shape to the old idea of a League of German Princes propounded by Frederic the Great, whilst at the same time paying its tribute to modern democratic ideals by incorporating the universal suffrage of its citizens in its Constitution. Thus at first sight it presented a somewhat romantic aspect; but it was nevertheless born of a centuries-old yearning—a yearning consecrated by the blood and sufferings of numberless generations. The birth of a powerful German Empire, far from destroying Europe's equilibrium, consolidated it.

On February 12th the French National Assembly met at Bordeaux, and a fortnight later a preliminary peace was signed at Versailles, under the terms of which France ceded to Germany Alsace (without Belfort) and Lorraine as far as the Seille (without Nancy), and undertook to pay a war indemnity of five milliard francs.

When the Treaty of Frankfurt, on May 10th, 1871, rendered peace definite, German troops still occupied the fortresses around Paris, where they were spectators of the Commune. The Provisional Government of M. Thiers succeeded in suppressing this movement with the help of General de Gallifet's troops, released from German captivity for that purpose. France paid the war indemnity exacted from her even before it became due, whereupon the German Army of Occupation commanded by General von Manteuffel, which had performed its difficult task with tact and discretion, retired.

During the last phase of the struggle between France and Germany for possession of the Rhine, that perennial conflict definitely became a national issue between the two countries. Henceforth, from source to estuary, the Rhine flowed through Germanic land, and from Bâle to Emmerich under German bridges. Exactly one thousand years had elapsed between

the day when Louis the German and Charles the Bald signed their agreement regarding the partition of the Carolingian Empire, and the day when Germany's national frontier was pushed forward—conformably with the spirit, if not with the wording, of that agreement—to the Vosges. The second millennium in the struggle for the Rhine had been closed.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPERIALISM, THE EUROPEAN CRISIS, AND THE PROBLEM OF THE RHINE AT THE PRESENT DAY

After the Franco-German War—Imperialist activities—Economic prosperity of the Rhine—French policy—Germany's international position—Bismarck's foreign policy—Germany saturated—William I and Bismarck—The German Empire as a political factor—Rhine and Bosphorus—The renascence of France—War clouds in 1875—*Le cauchemar des coalitions*—Bismarck and world politics—The Russo-Turkish War—The Russians before Adrianople—Congress of Berlin—Bismarck's policy of alliances—Austro-German alliance—Triple Alliance—Reinsurance Treaty—Franco-Russian *rapprochement*—The Alsatian problem—*Toujours y penser, jamais en parler*—Boulanger—Bismarck's speech on February 6th, 1888—Bismarck's fall—William II's policy—Growing tension and colonial wars—William II's foreign policy and its consequences—Shimonoseki, Jameson, Agadir, Algeciras—Mistaken methods but peaceful aims—Estrangement from Russia and refusal of a British alliance—Rejection of the idea of a "preventive war"—The Balkan crisis—The crime of Serajevo—Outbreak of the Great War—The problem of the Rhine within the compass of the Great War—Importance of propaganda—Campaigns of 1914 and 1915—Stationary position in East and West—German miscalculations—Campaign of 1916—America's entry into the War—The World Coalition's triumph over Germany—The Peace of Versailles and Wilson's League of Nations—France the real victor—Great Britain's world position after the War—French hegemony and German atrophy—Historic parallels—The Saar, the Rhine, and the Ruhr under French control—Passive resistance—Franco-British antagonism as viewed in the light of the Rhenish problem—Germany's future—*Rhenus fluminum princeps.*

THE Franco-German War was at an end. The German Empire had resuscitated and become the centre of gravity of the European balance of power. It found itself in undisturbed possession of the Rhine, from the frontier of Switzerland to that of Holland. But the world did not, as might have been expected, seek rest after its struggles. It plunged, on the contrary, into a vortex of imperialism, leaving far behind it all hitherto recorded limits of political and economic expansion. Imperialism, borne on the wings of capitalist industrialism,

henceforth reigned supreme in every branch of human activity.

The third millennium of the struggle for the Rhine was ushered in under the auspices of this development. And as that struggle had not yet been definitely decided, the germs of new and terrible conflicts could mature at leisure under the surface. The French wave had momentarily retreated, but it was destined, at no very distant date, to return with redoubled force. This might be anticipated with all the more certainty, since, under the German Empire's protection, the land watered by the Rhine rapidly thrived. Potash from the Sundgau, ore from Lorraine, coal from the Saar and Ruhr basins, Rhenish and Alsatian textile industries, the production of steel and iron, the linking-up of the entire river basin by means of a dense network of railroads and a highly developed shipping trade—all these factors combined to make the Rhineland once more, this time in a modern sense, the heart of Germany, and also a vital element of European economic life. Hence the effective protection of so sensitive an organism against injury became an imperative necessity. Here a danger lay, here was the germ of a momentous conflict, should France and Germany ever be called upon to cross swords again. And the Treaty of Frankfurt rendered a future war between the two nations inevitable; for that treaty betokened lasting peace just as little as the Treaty of Paris in 1763 between France and Great Britain, which moved Mme de Pompadour to tears of rage.

French policy remained unchanged as the result of the Franco-German War. France acted again as she did in 1715, in 1763, in 1815—that is to say she concentrated all her attention on her reconstruction, in order to be able to regain her lost power and satisfy anew her craving for hegemony. As for Germany, having been raised to her legitimate rank by the genial creator of her political unity, she found herself confronted by a tremendous task—the task of taking her place as a stable element, capable of development, alongside her progressive Western neighbours endowed with essentially democratic institutions.

At bottom Germany was an unwelcome recruit to every single member of a European political organization which had

long since been regulated. Europe disliked the old Holy Roman Empire's successor as a *parvenu* and distrusted her as a Prussian creation. Built-up on a federal basis, provided with a constitution which, from the French standpoint, merely consisted of "a practical redistribution of powers . . . realistic like its creator Bismarck," Germany presented her rivals with numerous vulnerable spots, not only from a geographical, but also from a political, point of view. All the elements of a future world coalition against her were given.

Everything depended on three factors: firstly, Germany's ability to adapt herself to her environment; secondly, the attitude assumed by that environment towards her; and, thirdly, the capacity of German statesmen for the constructive work of developing a Power whose newly acquired greatness had been established by force of arms. Since the struggle for the Rhine was not yet decided, the evolution of Europe remained determined in the future, as it had been in the past, mainly by the ever-present antagonism between France and Germany. From the very beginning Bismarck entertained no illusion as to the real state of affairs, and consistently based his whole policy on the fundamental fact of Franco-German rivalry, whereby he constantly aimed at assuring Germany's security alike in the rear and on either flank. Bismarck—the last, and perhaps the greatest, statesman of the "Continental school" in Europe—inevitably sought to found Germany's world position on her unfettered liberty of action in regard to France. This principle served him as a basis on which to shape Germany's relations with Austria and Russia, whereby he studiously avoided all implication of servitude on Germany's part. He carefully steered clear of Eastern conflicts, and respected Great Britain's sphere of interest without on that account sacrificing any of Germany's vital claims. And he summed up his foreign policy in the words: "Germany is saturated."

The strength of Bismarck's position at home rested on the relations of intimate confidence existing between him and Emperor William I. Even if this monarch could not always see eye to eye with his Chancellor, he never once refused the latter a support which Bismarck needed to carry out his far-sighted foreign policy and maintain his unique authority in Germany. William I, in simple and unobtrusive fashion,

always faithfully discharged the onerous duties of Kingship ; if he was not " the last of Kings " in Carlyle's meaning of the term, he was certainly the last great Prussian monarch, and, in the long line of German Emperors, he incontestably occupies a foremost place. In the struggle for the Rhine he worthily played the part ascribed by Barbarossa's legend to the bearer of Germany's Imperial Crown. An eminently constitutional ruler, he invariably remained a specimen of the finest type of Prussian, and withal—having grasped the true historic significance of his country's cardinal problem—he was a great German.

During the many years of life still granted William I after ascending the Imperial throne at the age of 74, he unwaveringly adhered to his conservative traditions and to his friendship with the founder of the German Empire. When he died on March 9th, 1888, he was succeeded—after a brief interval of 100 days, during which his dying son Frederic nominally reigned—by his twenty-nine-year-old grandson William II. Eighteen years had elapsed since the Rhine became once more " Germany's stream "—eighteen years during which the river basin developed rapidly into the main artery of Germany's economic life. Germany's prosperity and political importance had increased *pari passu* in unexampled fashion ; and yet this Empire, whose moral and material structure was forged in the course of three wars, never unsheathed its sword nor disturbed Europe's peace. Bismarck, the " man of blood and iron," had become a " rock of peace." Nothing could be more erroneous than to represent him as a " mischief-maker setting people together by the ears," and taking advantage of his *rôle* of common barrator to assure Germany's predominance. Ever since the conclusion of the Treaty of Frankfurt Bismarck worked incessantly to preserve peace. But this peaceful policy required a genius for its successful accomplishment. The tremendous boom of industry and trade, with its resulting social unrest, and France's systematically pursued policy of *revanche*, engendered a state of general and steadily growing disquietude in Europe. Old antagonisms were revived, new causes of friction arose, dissensions increased in number and acuity instead of diminishing.

Imperialist expansion, in which all the larger nations of the

globe took their share, progressed with extraordinary rapidity. The prevailing contagion profoundly affected Germany, whose economic prosperity was based on the efficiency of a people schooled by military discipline and peculiarly adapted to organized mass labour. Her prosperity found expression in the Empire's unceasing industrialization. That "silent revolution" was so speedy, that people tended to overlook the fact that it radically transformed, not only the social structure, but also the moral fabric, of the nation. The concentration of all Germany's national forces in a single great national State threw open the world at a single stroke to her products and her commerce. Her merchant navy, which had hitherto flown the ancient Hanseatic flag, now carried the Empire's colours to the most distant parts of the globe. Following the universal trend of an imperialistic and industrialist age, Germany soon occupied a foremost place among the great trading nations, and from a merely Continental Power developed into a World Power. Great Britain thus discovered in Germany a rival to be feared. But Anglo-German competition was still restricted to the economic sphere, for until Bismarck's fall Germany remained, politically speaking, an essentially Continental Power.

But Germany's internal evolution did not keep pace with her industrial and commercial expansion. Her internal political structure was still framed according to strictly conservative principles. The Prussian Constitution still remained the same as in the 'fifties, and Bismarck became the exponent of a conservative system based on the intangible authority of a powerful State. Himself the inflexible mainstay and bulwark of State authority, the precursor of German unity, he found himself entrusted with the destinies of a people which for centuries had known no dominant central authority, and which now adopted with enthusiastic fervour their leader's belief in the State's omnipotence. Viewed from this standpoint, it was only logical that Bismarck should stand above all parties and govern with the aid, sometimes of one group, sometimes of another. Whilst creating direct and universal suffrage for elections to the Reichstag, Bismarck maintained unchanged the historic rights of the Prussian monarchy. Within the Empire, sovereignty was incorporated in the Confederate Governments, organized federally under a pre-

dominant Prussia. Army and Civil Service retained the rôle ascribed to them as props of State authority by Frederic II ; and the State, although officially combating Socialism, sought to take the wind out of the latter's sails by means of social legislation acknowledged to be a model of its kind. The new German Empire, erected on these foundations, appeared, it is true, isolated amidst the democratic States of Western Europe ; but, compared with the monstrous structure of its Holy Roman predecessor, it was a monumental edifice of spacious dimensions and impressive proportions.

Despite the constant widening of the scope of world politics which followed the Franco-German War of 1870-1, Europe remained dominated by two cardinal problems—namely, those of the Rhine and the Dardanelles. Hence these problems, and the potential conflicts they involved, determined Germany's foreign policy from the start.

Already in October 1870 the Dardanelles question reappeared on the horizon, when Russia, seizing a welcome opportunity to get rid of the most oppressive restriction imposed on her in Paris in 1856, refused to recognize any further limitation of her naval armaments and reassumed sovereign control over her fleet. As for the Rhenish problem, it loomed ominously in the background of the eminently unsatisfactory relations between France and Germany.

The fact of every Great Power in Europe being interested in maintaining the European equilibrium saved France, in 1871, from the imposition of more onerous terms. Bismarck demanded from his vanquished adversary neither disarmament nor exaggerated tribute. Thus no obstacles from without impeded France's recovery. After hesitating some years between a return to a constitutional Bourbon monarchy and a definite adoption of the Republic, the Constitutional Assembly decided in March 1875, more by a "fluke" than otherwise, in favour of the latter. But, needless to say, the continuity of French foreign policy remained unquestioned. It was not difficult for the new conservative Republic to put relations between France and other non-German Continental Powers on a satisfactory footing. Defeated France sought to effect her reconstruction by means of a policy of alliances, to which she has invariably shown herself attached in moments

of weakness. A constellation of Powers similar to that confronting Frederic the Great in days of old threatened to recur at Germany's expense.

Clearly recognizing the perils involved by France's natural desire for alliances, Bismarck endeavoured to frustrate her efforts in that direction. He succeeded in bringing about a meeting of the German, Austrian, and Russian Emperors in Berlin in 1872, with the object of reaffirming the monarchical principle and the solidarity of its representatives ; and he thus baulked French schemes for a *rapprochement* with Austria and Russia. Bismarck's success, however, proved to be of short duration, and the "Three Emperors' Alliance" was more an emergency measure than anything else. Victor Emmanuel's visit to Berlin in 1873, whither he came to assert, in his turn, his solidarity with that Alliance, could not possibly alter the position of affairs, since Italy's policy was definitely and immutably directed—in conformity with the Italian national instinct—towards the recovery of her "unredeemed" provinces still under Austrian rule. For this reason she found herself obliged to change her alliances as her interests might require, regardless of assurances given. Thus, already in 1875, Germany had to rely more or less exclusively on her own strength. France, whose Army on a peace footing then numbered 453,000 men, as against 401,000 under the colours in Germany, tended manifestly towards a *rapprochement* with Russia, where a Panslav movement with markedly francophile leanings was developing ; and she meanwhile increased her armaments so rapidly as to cause Moltke to consider the possibility and advisability of a preventive war. In an inspired newspaper article, Bismarck openly raised the question : "Is war in sight ? "

France considered herself menaced and appealed for help to St. Petersburg, whereupon Alexander II and his Minister, Prince Gortchakoff, hastened to Berlin as mediators. The ensuing conversations afforded Bismarck a welcome possibility of clearing up a delicate situation and assuring peace, whilst simultaneously opening out to him new perspectives. The shadow of a future Franco-Russian alliance could not escape his trained eye ; and since Great Britain likewise appeared on the scene to lend her diplomatic support to France, the necessity of safeguarding Germany against a hostile coalition

became clear to him. Henceforth what he himself aptly termed *le cauchemar des coalitions* dictated his attitude.

Bismarck consequently directed his efforts to basing Germany's world policy on her Continental policy as he conceived it. He knew that she still lacked complete freedom of action in Europe, and that if the struggle for the Rhine might be considered at an end from a German standpoint, a recoil must always be anticipated in view of France's immutable aims. Moltke likewise clearly recognized this truth when he uttered the prophetic words: "What we have acquired by force of arms, we shall have to defend by force of arms within fifty years." For this reason Bismarck abstained from developing Germany's naval power to any large extent. Great Britain, not feeling her maritime supremacy threatened, was therefore not on principle hostile to Germany. Great Britain's eyes were still riveted on the Dardanelles, where Russian pressure was constantly increasing; and she sought to reconcile France's "recovery" in the Mediterranean and the Near East with her own claims in those regions. As Bismarck adopted an attitude of studied reserve in the Eastern crisis, none of the rival Powers could rely on Germany for support of their own particular aims. So long as that German preponderance with which France found herself confronted since Sedan made itself felt in this manner, it could safely be regarded as a guarantee of European peace.

When, in 1876, the Near Eastern crisis resulted in a Russo-Turkish war, a new grouping of the European Powers took place. Panslavism raised its head, and the "Three Emperors' Alliance" came to an end. Russia appeared on the Danube as champion of the Christian nationalities in the Balkans; her Armies, reinforced by Rumanian troops, advanced on Adrianople to enforce a demand for the creation of a Greater Bulgarian Principality which should control the shores of the Ægean from Dedeagatch to Salonika. When Russia demanded also for herself a slice of Asia Minor, Turkey found herself in imminent danger on two fronts, being thrown back in the East on Erzerum and almost completely cut-off in the West from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Novibazar, and Albania. In this critical moment Austria-Hungary and Great Britain joined hands to check Russia's expansion. Remembering ancient claims formulated in Prince Eugene's days, Austria demanded free

access to the Levant. She feared for the only political future still remaining to her, in Bosnia and Serbia, on the Save and the Struma, after her renunciation of the Rhine, and the loss of the Po and Adige. Relieved of all cares in Germany, she now definitely took up her position as an East European Power. Great Britain was even more perturbed by the progress of events than Austria. She saw the Bosphorus under Russian domination, the approaches to India threatened by Russian troops, and the entire Levant endangered. Although Europe's political danger zone appeared displaced towards the East, the crisis produced an audible echo on the Rhine and Seine. The outlines of a new European war of vast dimensions became visible behind the Russo-Turkish conflict.

The rival Powers commenced warlike preparations. France and Germany alone remained in the background. Germany was not sufficiently interested in the Dardanelles and the Balkans; France had in 1878 not yet sufficiently recovered strength to adopt an independent attitude. At bottom the hands of both were tied on the Rhine. With her gaze obstinately fixed on the Vosges, which since 1870 lay between her and her former predominance in the counsels of Europe, France even missed a unique opportunity of obtaining a new footing in Egypt, thereby abandoning the historic aspirations associated with the names of St. Louis and Napoleon in her determination to concentrate her attention on Alsace-Lorraine. But such a policy of rally was in strict conformity with French tradition. France knew that once she could regain her hegemony in the Rhine basin, she would regain by a single stroke everything momentarily lost to her. England profited by France's want of freedom. The extravagant Khedive Ismail Pasha, finding himself in financial straits, offered his Suez Canal shares to the British Government; and Disraeli, by promptly acquiring them by telegram for £40,000,000, assured England's control over the Canal, and gave her a welcome right of intervention in Egypt's internal affairs. Aboukir and St. Jean d'Acre thus bore abundant, if tardy, fruit, at the psychological moment when conflicts of interests in the Near East seemed on the verge of begetting a new European war.

Open hostility prevailed between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary, on one hand, and Russia on the other. But at

the twelfth hour Bismarck's skill succeeded in averting a rupture. He declared that Germany was disinterested in Bulgaria, and that the Eastern conflict was not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer. This declaration paved the way for a general understanding. In 1878 a Congress of the rival Powers assembled in Berlin, at which Germany's Chancellor played the *rôle* of mediator with the aim of maintaining European peace without injuring Russia's legitimate interests. But if Bismarck was assured of British and Austrian support, he proved unable to prevent Russia from experiencing numerous disappointments. Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina; Great Britain took possession of Cyprus; Rumania exchanged Bessarabia for the Dobrudcha; Russia had to content herself with Kars and Batoum and the creation of a "smaller" Bulgaria, whilst withdrawing her troops from the Balkans. The Treaty of Berlin marked the beginning of an estrangement between Russia and Germany. Disraeli, returning in triumph to London, could boast that he brought "peace with honour." But Bismarck, as "honest broker," earned no gratitude.

The Berlin Congress did not solve the Near Eastern crisis. But if it rendered prevailing antagonisms more acute and increased the general ill will entertained towards Germany, it at least preserved European peace at the time. It is consequently characteristic of Bismarck's complicated policy that he should have regarded the Congress as "a well-contrived and carefully treated whole" (*ein durchdachtes und sorgsam behandeltes Ganzes*). He had, at the Congress, furnished a tangible proof of "saturated" Germany's will to peace, of her ability to preside at a European Conference, of her willingness to accept the responsibilities of mediation. But this demonstration constituted the price paid for acquiring new experience. The first signs of Russian distrust of Germany now became manifest; and France, henceforth assured of finding on the Neva an ally in her future struggle for the Rhine, could shape her policy accordingly.

The era of "big coalitions" dawned.

The Berlin Congress formed the last attempt to secure a purely European equilibrium in which the world problems which exceed Europe's boundaries play no decisive part. Hence it marks a date in history. Bismarck—the only really

great statesman ever produced by Germany—left that Congress with the consciousness that Germany must not in future rely exclusively on her own will to peace and her own power to maintain it, but also on a policy of defensive alliances. In other words, he realized that peace could henceforth be only an “armed peace”—that all Powers must henceforth be so fully occupied with other things as to prevent their uniting in an anti-German coalition. To combine Germany’s desire for peace with the constantly developing tendency to oversea expansion of a rapidly increasing nation, without betraying any signs of weakness or exciting dangerous hostilities ; to frame an inevitable policy of alliances in such a manner as to enable Germany to retain her leadership and avoid her becoming involved in her allies’ adventures : such was the aim which Bismarck now set himself. And it may be truly said that he succeeded in accomplishing it. In 1879 he concluded an alliance with Austria-Hungary, the terms of which obliged either Power to come to its partner’s assistance in the event of Russian aggression, but only required “benevolent neutrality” should either be attacked by any other Power—provided Russia herself did not join hands with the latter. In 1883 the Austro-German alliance became a Triple Alliance by the inclusion of Italy, the object being to safeguard the southern flank, in so far as the existing antagonism between Austria and Italy rendered this possible. Bismarck encouraged French expansion in Africa and Asia, hoping thereby to divert France’s attention from the Rhine. Whilst careful to preserve Germany’s dignity, he scrupulously refrained from any interference in Great Britain’s sphere ; and at the same time embarked warily, with an experienced statesman’s circumspection, on a policy of colonization for Germany.

Bismarck crowned his activity in 1887 by concluding a secret “Reinsurance Treaty” with Russia, according to which Germany promised Russia her aid in the case of an Austro-Hungarian aggression, Russia undertaking in exchange to support Germany should the latter be attacked by France. As for Great Britain, she persisted in her splendid isolation, proving thereby that the Cabinet of St. James’s considered the European balance of power to be safe. Thus Germany’s position appeared, in the closing years of William I’s reign,

as secure as the speedy progress of events, incessantly creating new conditions, could admit. The international horizon receded unceasingly, and Germany needed careful leadership if she, a Continental Germanic Power, wished to maintain her position in this constantly widening circle. The various parts of Bismarck's skilfully constructed edifice were so inextricably bound up with each other that, if a single pillar gave way, the entire building was in danger of tumbling down.

Meanwhile France's recovery had proceeded sufficiently far to permit of the French nation concentrating its unanimous will on the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine. Not for an instant did France recognize the Treaty of Frankfurt, which wrested from her "a strip of her national territory," as a definite solution of her historic struggle with Germany for the Rhine. And if it be undoubtedly true that Alsace was originally a Germanic settlement, colonized by German tribes, and has remained a valuable German cultural unit, it is likewise a fact that its incorporation in the French national State took place at a time when a collective German national consciousness was still non-existent. Although, culturally speaking, but loosely connected with monarchical France, Alsace nevertheless adapted itself to circumstances. Then came the Revolution. In common with the rest of France, Alsace experienced the emancipation of the *Tiers-État*, the proclamation of the Rights of Men, the erection of a democratic State. The Napoleonic epos and the country's industrial prosperity, which had grown steadily since the early 'thirties, achieved an inevitable evolutionary process. In 1871 the Alsatians were still, as regards their fundamental psychological traits, German ; what we may call their cultural superstructure, was partly German and partly French ; politically, whether we consider their mentality or their organization, they were wholly French. Such was the price Germany paid for opportunities repeatedly missed, at Utrecht, Aix-la-Chapelle, Paris, and Vienna.

The cession of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871 did not only involve for France a decrease of power and population, a diminution of military prestige, and a deterioration of her eastern frontier ; it signified likewise a political loss. The French saw in this dismemberment of their State, one and indivisible,

an outrage to their national ideals. It is thus easily comprehensible that the desire to restore the former Rhine frontier should never have been extinguished, nor the humiliation inflicted in 1871 forgotten. Consciousness of France's national impoverishment invariably determined the Third Republic's policy, although at times the cry for *revanche* was more subdued and France's ambitions in this direction were relegated to a discreet background. But the nation smarted unceasingly under the defeat *per se*, no less than under the resulting loss of two fair provinces. Despite colonial expansion, it continued to focus its attention on a single centre, following thereby with unerring instinct the memorable advice tendered it by Gambetta, when, alluding to Alsace-Lorraine, he said *qu'il faut toujours y penser, jamais en parler.*

When, in 1887, General Boulanger's influence spurred France to an attitude of ecstatic hero-worship, and a wave of defiant hostility towards her ancestral foe surged suddenly throughout the country, Europe became—for the first time since 1871—unpleasantly aware of a war of *revanche* looming on the horizon. On February 16th, 1888, Bismarck saw himself obliged to utter a public warning against France's warlike policy—a policy encouraged by Panslav propaganda in Eastern Europe. Weighing every word he spoke, the German Chancellor gave the Reichstag—at the psychological moment when the struggle for the Rhine seemed on the verge of breaking out anew—a sketch of his policy of alliances. Solemnly he warned all whom it might concern to beware of attacking “the peaceful German nation,” adding that the latter would be found presenting a united front to its aggressor. The echo of his words was such that their effect still persisted after Bismarck's dismissal from office, at a time when his methods had been abandoned by William II and the latter's advisers.

William II's accession in 1888, followed by Bismarck's dismissal less than two years later, marks the line of cleavage between two generations and two conceptions of the world. The young autocrat transformed the office of Chancellor into an Imperial secretaryship. The era associated with William I's name, which, in spite of the rapid economic development of its last decades, had retained a glimmer of romance and

proved capable of comprehending the true significance of German history, came to an end.

As far as Germany and her political development were concerned, the Emperor Frederic's early death meant skipping an entire generation. We do not intend discussing here the question as to whether that liberal-minded monarch would have shaped Germany's future differently, and whether or not Bismarck would have been able to adapt himself to such a course. Certain it is, however, that a gap existed between the era of the first and that of the second William—a gap widened into a chasm by Bismarck's fall. Warning voices from the past, voices of vanished generations, might have been heard, but they remained unheeded. True, William II, judged by appearances, seemed also a romanticist ; but his neo-romanticism lacked idealistic foundations, was a merely decorative element destined to serve personal ends. Towards the century's close we find Germany, in all branches of her activity, pervaded by a shallow impressionism. The result of an all too rapid economic development was to cause men's minds to be absorbed by materialistic pursuits, and to wither idealism at its roots. But however greatly the political conceptions and diplomatic methods of William II's era differed from those of the heroic Bismarckian age, Germany's will to peace remained unchanged. German policy under William II became appallingly incoherent and dangerously indiscreet, it lacked all sense of proportion, and Bismarck's master-hand was everywhere only too visibly missing ; the new rulers forgot that Germany had not sufficiently consolidated her position in Europe to be able to permit herself gestures as thoughtless as they were vain ; but that policy was never for a single moment deliberately bellicose or aggressive.

William II's impulsive personal policy, often precipitate and excessively noisy, and which was more frequently inspired by his advisers than his autocratic demeanour would lead us to suspect, reminds one of Frederic William II. Just as the latter thought to preserve, nay increase, Frederic the Great's heritage by embarking on enterprises far removed from Prussia's centre and beyond her range ; so also William II hoped to add fresh lustre to Bismarck's heritage by participating in remote political and economic undertakings, abandoning

the wise reserve imposed by Bismarck on Germany's relations with her neighbours, and arbitrarily steering an erratic course full of perilous inconsistencies. But notwithstanding all his mistakes, William II none the less definitely and unreservedly directed his policy towards the maintenance of peace in an even greater degree than did his ancestor. His aim—*i.e.* the preservation of peace—was fixed *ab initio*, and he adhered to it independently of all external developments; only the methods he adopted for realizing it were faulty. As a matter of fact, the fundamentally peaceful principles of Germany's post-Bismarckian policy were mainly responsible for preventing the outbreak of a European war during twenty-four years after the Iron Chancellor's downfall. That catastrophe did not occur until the general tension due to an intense competition born of imperialist expansion had attained such dimensions as to render it inevitable.

The beginning of this evolution dates back to the Treaty of Frankfurt, and its fundamental underlying factor was the struggle for the Rhine, although the latter remained concealed by vaster perspectives opened out by the universal struggle for world power.

When Bismarck retired, he saw his policy of alliances already jeopardized. Russia and France were drawing perceptibly nearer one another, and it did not last long before France found herself sufficiently recovered to assume, diplomatically speaking, the offensive.

The growing international tension which marked the last decade of the nineteenth century was characterized by colonial wars. The United States annexed Hawaii, and wrested Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines from Spain. France extended her Asiatic empire; conquered Tunis, Nigeria, and Madagascar; and pushed forward from Lake Chad to the Nile's source, where she was brought to a standstill, Colonel Marchand being compelled to haul down the tricolour at Fashoda at England's behest. Russia advanced, slowly but surely, towards India's northern frontiers; and she built the strategic Transsiberian railroad, which, by linking-up Moscow and St. Petersburg with Manchuria and the Pacific, enabled her to appear in strength on the shores of the Yellow Sea and menace Corea. Japan successfully made war on China, thereby obtaining a footing on the Asiatic continent with the object of checking Russia.

Great Britain took possession of the Soudan and annexed the Boer Republics. Belgium established herself in the Congo with Great Britain's assistance. Italy sought—vainly—compensation in Abyssinia and Tripoli for the destruction of her hopes in Tunis. Germany exchanged Zanzibar for Heligoland, added German East Africa to her colonies in South-West Africa and the Cameroons, obtained some islands in the South Seas and the "lease" of Kiaochow. The cession of Zanzibar was the first outward and visible sign of a radical change of Germany's policy. But William II saw in the acquisition of a barren rock in the North Sea, which he considered indispensable as a naval station, an equivalent for the loss of rich territory in East Africa.

At the close of the nineteenth century European politics were to all intents and purposes—despite the chronic crisis in the Near East, which gave rise to a short war between Turkey and Greece in 1897—dominated by the world expansion of all European Powers. Tentatively, hesitatingly, erratically, post-Bismarckian Germany followed this extraordinarily rapid movement. If the profits she obtained were small, the enmities she created were formidable—although she invariably pursued peaceful aims. Her blundering methods were illustrated by the non-renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, by her intervention in the peace negotiations between China and Japan, and by her attitude during the Anglo-Boer War.

When William II failed to renew the Russo-German Reinsurance Treaty, he found himself in an embarrassing position brought about entirely by himself and due to Bismarck's dismissal. Alexander III and his Cabinet distrusted Bismarck's successors; and these, in their turn, saw in the treaty a two-edged sword which they preferred to relinquish. That the non-renewal of the treaty implied the ruin of Bismarck's security policy and left Germany's eastern frontier undefended, completely escaped the attention of William II and his advisers. Thus not only was a treaty abandoned, but a system discarded. Russo-German friendship depended henceforth on William II's erratic private correspondence with Nicholas II, whilst Russia linked-up her policy with that of France; and since Russia saw in Germany merely Austria-Hungary's ally, it was not difficult for French diplomacy to gain the upper hand on the Neva. On

August 22nd, 1891, the Franco-Russian alliance assumed concrete shape. French capital flowed in abundant streams to Russia, and the race of armaments began. Invisibly, noiselessly, the struggle for the Rhine emerged from the shadowy background.

A second enemy was soon added to the first one. Germany's diplomacy succeeded in estranging Japan.

When, in 1895, Germany insisted on a revision of Japan's peace conditions in order to save China from dismemberment, she acted conjointly with France and Russia. But, contrary to her partners, she used language so intemperate, that the whole force of Japan's resentment was directed against her. Thus the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which compelled Japan to cede to the united demands of France, Germany, and Russia, created violent Japanese animosity against Germany—an animosity skilfully concealed under a smiling mask of friendship until the day when it could give free vent to itself.

Shortly afterwards William II likewise aroused Great Britain's suspicions. On receiving news of Jameson's Raid, in January 1896, he despatched a telegram to President Krüger congratulating him on having warded-off the attack. And when, in October 1899, hostilities between London and the Boer Republics officially commenced, Germany managed, by her attitude, to excite Great Britain's keenest and lasting resentment. True, an open breach was avoided owing to the Kaiser "dropping" the Boers; but her tortuous and incoherent policy deprived Germany of all authority.

In 1900, on the Boxer movement in China assuming dangerous proportions, the Powers sent expeditionary corps to Pekin. Germany immediately pushed herself to the front with 20,000 men, and William II insisted on the German Field-Marshal Count Waldersee being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the allied forces. By these means, and also by tactless utterances, the Kaiser only poured oil on the flame of Asiatic hostility; on the other hand, by shifting from one side to another between Russia and Great Britain, he enhanced the already existing suspicion of Germany in either camp. The kotow of a Chinese Prince before the Imperial throne¹

¹ On Germany's demand, the Chinese Government sent a mission, headed by a Manchu Prince, to Potsdam in 1901, to express contrition for the murder of the German Ambassador in Pekin, Baron Ketteler, the year before. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

was symbolical of a hollow and decorative policy of bombast and bathos, which necessarily gave rise to every sort of misunderstanding.

Three years later Germany's international position was irretrievably undermined. On the threshold of the twentieth century she deliberately missed the only opportunity ever afforded her, since Russia's secession, of finding adequate security. The offer of this security came from Great Britain.

The latter began to tire of her "splendid isolation" on seeing herself more seriously menaced than ever by Russia in Asia and France in Africa, whilst her own hands were tied in South Africa. She felt herself unequal to the task of facing, at one and the same time, a Franco-Russian alliance which had unquestionably grown stronger, and Germany's increasing trade competition. The European balance of power was endangered, and the obligations resulting from Great Britain's own world position were such as to convince her of the necessity of securing a sword in Asia and a prop in Europe so as to be able to exert her influence in distant spheres. The British Government consequently selected Joseph Chamberlain to sound Germany on the subject, and in 1901 the Cabinet of St. James's proposed a definite understanding which Germany declined, Prince Bülow and Holstein fearing lest such an agreement should place Germany under British tutelage. England thereupon resolved to make use of her freedom of action *against* Germany, whom she henceforth combated as her most powerful trading competitor, who had meanwhile become the greatest seafaring nation on the Continent, and already threatened to outstrip England herself on the world market. British statesmen remembered their country's traditional policy of alliances against the stronger, a policy personified by King Edward VII. Despite the Triple Alliance, Germany now appeared isolated. The beginning of 1902 witnessed the signature of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and under its ægis Japan was able, two years later, to successfully risk a trial of strength with her Russian rival in the Far East. On April 18th, 1904, Lord Lansdowne and Delcassé concluded that Anglo-French Convention relating to Egypt and Morocco which marked the birth of the *entente cordiale*. Great Britain aimed at weakening Russia to the extent necessary to render her tractable,

and at binding France's hands by means of a *condominium* in the Mediterranean.

The hour now struck for the active resumption by France of her historic policy on the Rhine. She had welcomed Bismarck's fall with a sigh of relief, but consistently refused to respond to William II's fitful advances. She increased her armaments, replenished Russia's coffers, and not for a moment did she suffer her attention to be diverted, either by internal strife or colonial expansion, from the *ligne bleue des Vosges*. The humiliation of Fashoda could not prevent the conclusion of the *entente cordiale* with Great Britain six years later, for in her eyes the Rhine was more important than the Nile. Having come to an agreement with London, she deemed herself capable of steering an independent course; she pursued her expansionist policy more energetically than ever, and converted her North African possessions into a vast reservoir of man-power.

This led to the first really serious conflict with Germany. When France obtained a footing in Morocco, and, sure of Great Britain's support, initiated her so-called policy of *pénétration pacifique* into the Sherifian Empire, Germany intervened to prevent this decisive shifting of the balance of power in the Mediterranean taking place without her consent. Germany's "diplomatic gesture" proved most unfortunate for her, since it gave offence, not only in Paris, but also in London, and Berlin found itself confronted for the first time by the newly formed Entente. Such a situation was obviously inevitable, seeing that Germany had missed the golden opportunity presented her and rejected England's offer, when the latter, abandoning her "splendid isolation," sought in the first instance an understanding with Berlin. But, however obvious, it none the less surpassed Germany's comprehension. William II's demonstrative journey to Tangier in 1905 only produced the result of eliciting a British declaration of solidarity with France. Rumours of war filled the air, and for skilful propagandists it was an easy task to represent Germany as the disturber of European peace. To make matters worse for herself, Germany consented to entrust the settlement of the Moroccan difficulty to an international conference which assembled at Algeciras, where she found herself backed solely by her "brilliant second," Austria-

Hungary—Italy proving openly recalcitrant. Germany thus lost the only remaining security on which Bismarck had based his system—namely, her leadership within the Triple Alliance. Italy silently severed the bonds attaching her to the latter, henceforth reduced to a mere skeleton, and drew ever closer the ties of friendship uniting her to the Western Powers. As for Austria, she emancipated herself from Berlin's tutelage, unhesitatingly claimed Germany's support of Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia in 1908, and in the ensuing Balkan crisis resolutely took the reins into her own hands. This completed the demolition of the Bismarckian edifice. Germany's preponderance within the Triple Alliance came definitely to an end. Henceforth, when her vital interests were at stake, she could only rely on her own resources.

The situation, already sufficiently critical, was still further envenomed by William II's policy in the Levant and Asia Minor, where he assumed the *rôle* of protector of Turkey—thereby placing Germany, contrary to her traditions, in opposition to Russia's claims on Constantinople—and where he assiduously propagated German influence in Persia and Mesopotamia. Antagonism between France and Germany was thus complicated by antagonism between Russia and Germany, and Great Britain and Germany. This meant the complete "encircling" of Germany on land and sea.

Thus, thanks to William II's personal *politique de cabinet*, Bismarck's heritage was rapidly frittered away, although in one fundamental respect, it is true, the former adhered strictly to Bismarckian tradition—namely, in its desire to maintain peace. Despite indiscreet and bombastic utterances, William II was never really eager to gather the laurels of a military conqueror. However faulty its methods, German policy clung steadfastly to Bismarck's maxim: "avoid a preventive war"; and this was the only Bismarckian principle to which it did cling. In his celebrated speech in the Reichstag on February 6th, 1888, Bismarck had declared that "with a powerful instrument such as we possess in the German Army we must refrain from aggression. . . . If Germany ever goes to war . . . it must be a national war, waged by the entire nation, with the same enthusiasm as in 1870, when Germany was unscrupulously attacked."

And yet even Bismarck himself overlooked the fact that

a situation might conceivably arise in which the tangled skein of a blundering policy pursued by incompetent, albeit well-intentioned, muddlers should become so hopelessly embroiled that war must appear the only possible, if desperate, means of unravelling it.

In 1911 Germany again found herself involved in a perilous conflict with France concerning Morocco. Manifestly the hostile ring encompassing her was being drawn closer. And at that time a preventive war would have afforded her the only possibility of extricating herself from her difficulties. Yet, although the situation differed totally from what it had been in Bismarck's days, William II, despite the radical change of circumstances, acted conformably with Bismarck's advice and avoided a war, the eventuality of which his military advisers, thereby conscientiously fulfilling their duty, were bound to consider very seriously in view of the growing Franco-Russian menace. Neither Great Britain, nor France, nor Russia were ready for war in 1911. And it cannot be denied that Germany furnished a truly convincing and tragic proof of her will to peace.

After this date Paris showed no inclination to renew the attempt made in 1911 by M. Caillaux to arrive at an understanding with Berlin. On the contrary, M. Raymond Poincaré, M. Caillaux's successor as Premier, directed all his energy to kindling warlike enthusiasm among his own compatriots. At the same time he travelled demonstratively to St. Petersburg with the object of encouraging Russia to redouble her efforts and to hasten the concentration of her Armies on the Vistula ; whereby he undertook, in exchange, to induce the French Parliament to prolong military service from two to three years. Under an agreement with Great Britain, France concentrated her naval strength in the Mediterranean, whilst England assumed the defence of the French northern and western coasts.

On November 23rd, 1912, the Anglo-French *entente* developed into a concrete understanding that each country, in the event of war, would support the other. This understanding was arrived at as the result of an exchange of letters between Sir Edward Grey and the French Ambassador, Paul Cambon, and without any consultation of Parliament on either side. It constituted a triumph for French diplomacy, and M. Poincaré

earned his reward by being elected President of the Republic in January 1913. France had found the statesman she wanted—the leader determined to stake everything on an attempt to reconquer the Rhine. And Great Britain, who lost King Edward VII too soon in 1910, found herself henceforth bound to France's chariot.

This engagement proved unprofitable for Great Britain. For if France's declared aim was the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine, her secret object—manifest, nevertheless, to every student of history—consisted in the reconquest of the Rhineland. Possession of the latter, and not of oversea colonies, has invariably been the surest fundament of French hegemony in Europe. Notwithstanding this palpable fact, Great Britain guaranteed France Alsace-Lorraine in return for obtaining French and Russian assistance in the task of suppressing Germany as a World Power, and confining her once more within strictly Continental limits. A war of destruction was thus rendered inevitable, should a European conflict throw open to French Armies the road to the Rhine. Henceforth France led the Triple Entente. As regards Russia, M. Poincaré's efforts to spur her on were actively seconded by Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador in Paris.

In 1912 the Anglo-French *entente* had not, it is true, yet assumed its subsequent shape as a defensive and offensive alliance; but such a community of interests united Paris and London, that binding arrangements of a military nature were taken in view of a coming war. Since Great Britain had necessarily to envisage the prospect of a land war in addition to a naval one, co-operation between French and British troops became indispensable, and could only be realized by a British Army forming the left wing of the French forces. This, again, implied utilizing the Belgian glacis. Germany, on the other hand, faced by a war on two fronts, could just as little renounce breaking through the line of fortresses on the Scheldt and crossing the Flemish plains in order to invade France. Both parties were therefore justified *a priori* in doing away with Belgium's artificial neutrality. Recognizing this embarrassing situation, Belgium herself decided not to adhere to a policy of neutrality towards all parties. The reason was obvious, if we consider the pressure capable of being exerted by Great Britain on the Belgian coast, and

France's influence in Belgium's counsels. Hence, contrary to the experience of history, Belgium consented to be used as a base of operations against Germany, instead of against France, as Great Britain invariably regarded her in former days. France, Great Britain, and Belgium concluded conventions to this effect as far back as 1906, and confirmed them in 1912. Geographical conditions were such as to permit the Entente saddling Germany with the odium of the breach of a neutrality still nominally existing in 1914; for a German offensive in the West required imperatively a deployment of German troops on the Meuse sufficiently rapid to enable Germany to enter Belgium before her adversaries. The French and British Armies, on the other hand, could afford to concentrate on French soil, whilst Belgian forces held the Germans back on the Gette. Thus from a military standpoint the Entente had an advantage. Its plan was to tie the Germans down in Eastern Europe by means of the Russians, to let its own Armies fight in Belgium and on the plateau of Lorraine, and to carry the war to Germany's frontiers when the time came.

As Bismarck had prophesied, a new Near Eastern crisis heralded the imminent outbreak of hostilities.

When, in 1912, the Balkan States rose at Russia's instigation against Turkey in order to push her back to the Dardanelles, international relations in Europe were already strained almost to breaking-point. Triple Alliance and Triple Entente faced each other, both armed to the teeth. But the Balkan war was unwelcome to the latter, since it threatened to weaken, rather than strengthen, the Anglo-Franco-Russian understanding. Russia had pledged herself to her allies to throw her entire weight into the balance against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Should therefore the Near Eastern crisis engender a European conflict, the fact of Russia's attention being diverted to the Bosphorus appeared to France and Great Britain eminently undesirable.

But there was no longer any possibility of preventing the avalanche. After the Balkan States had conquered Macedonia, a second war broke out immediately in consequence of a quarrel between the victors concerning the booty. Serbia and Greece were now pitted against Bulgaria, and actively supported by Rumania. But although the spreading conflagration

approached dangerously near the European powder-magazine, the Powers nevertheless—albeit with much difficulty—extinguished it. But any hopes that might have been entertained of preserving European peace for long were doomed to disappointment. The smouldering embers burst anew into flame in Albania; and anti-Austrian propaganda in Serbia, systematically carried on for many years past, culminated on June 28th, 1914, in the assassination, at Serajevo, of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. The die was cast.

Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Belgrade dragged the Triple Alliance into the now inevitable conflict. Russia placed herself protectingly before Serbia, and—assured of French and British support—prepared for war. Russia's mobilization was the last impetus needed to set the ball rolling. The entanglements resulting from the European system of alliances, the headlong precipitancy with which negotiations were conducted at the twelfth hour, the putting into motion of the gigantic military apparatuses of the various Powers, the irreconcilable divergency of the interests at stake—all these factors combined to bring about a general explosion.

The struggle for the Rhine, linked to that for the Dardanelles, and transformed by Anglo-German antagonism, developed into a world war.

This is not the place to recount the story of the Great War, a task I have already accomplished elsewhere.¹ The ghastly details of this gigantic tragedy are only too familiar to the present generation. It is certain that the Great War did not arise solely out of the struggle for the Rhine; but its background is nevertheless formed by centuries-old antagonism between France and Germany, resulting from France's aspirations to a Continental hegemony based on possession of that river.

The Great War broke out at a time when the progress of technical science rendered possible the development of propaganda on a scale hitherto unknown; and it soon appeared that propaganda was susceptible of becoming a formidable weapon in the hands of a belligerent capable of utilizing it

¹ Hermann Stegemann: *Geschichte des Krieges*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt.)

skilfully, whereby it must be remembered that the conditions of modern warfare themselves contribute to enhance the deadly effect of efficient propaganda. Devastations inseparable from the occupation of Franco-Belgian territory measuring 440 miles in length by 30 in breadth, rendered the German invasion in 1914 an incomparably heavier visitation for the inhabitants than had been the case in 1814 or 1870. And when, in the spring of 1917, the invading Armies retreated from the Somme to the Scarpe, the inevitable ruins accumulated in the evacuated region aroused universal indignation. In former days, when, obedient to orders given by French statesmen and generals operating by methods of systematic barbarism in pursuance of a coldly calculated policy of violence, undisciplined and plundering French hordes wrought infinitely greater suffering among a peaceful and defenceless German population, no such thing as public opinion existed. Hence the devastation of the Palatinate and Baden, of the Rhineland, of Westphalia and Hesse, the incendiaries' torch carried into Swabia and Franconia, the plundering of Hanover and Thuringia, never excited anything like the same widespread indignation as did the laying waste of certain French areas during the Great War. And, not having been exploited for its own ends by a cleverly organized propaganda, France's predatory wars in Germany were forgotten by the present generation. The latter cared not about the sufferings endured by its predecessors. Thanks to the skilful propaganda of the Allies, Germany lost the Great War politically before losing it on the battlefield.

The rapid German advance on Paris in August and September 1914 came to a standstill, after the Germans had been obliged to weaken their enveloping wing in order to send reinforcements to East Prussia, threatened by a Russian invasion. On September 9th the German troops were forced to retreat from the Marne to the Aisne, so as to avoid being enveloped in their turn. A war of position began in the West, where hostile Armies confronted each other from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier.

In the East, Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff destroyed a Russian Army at Tannenberg on August 28th, 1914, and took 90,000 Russian prisoners. A second Russian Army met with a similar fate immediately afterwards in the Masurian

Lakes ; and, in the fall, a successful campaign in Poland brought the main Russian force to a standstill near Lodz. Nevertheless, in Eastern Europe also no decisive solution could be reached, and stagnation set in.

Operations on a large scale were resumed in the following spring, when General Mackensen, after breaking through the southern Russian front between Gorlice and Tarnow, drove the Russian Army back over the San and Bug, took Kovno and Brest-Litovsk, and entered Warsaw. In the West, concentrically planned attacks on the German positions in Champagne and Artois failed.

At the commencement of 1916 the German Supreme Command, now entrusted to General Falkenhayn, found itself confronted by very great difficulties. Since the concentric attacks on the German front in Champagne and Artois had proved unsuccessful, the allied French and British, whose combined forces in the West now numbered 3,470,000 as against 2,350,000 Germans, determined to resort to a thrust in the lowland of the Somme, where active preparations to this end were made.

At the same time, the German General Staff found that it had miscalculated the effects of the campaign against Russia in 1915. This campaign did not destroy Russia's military strength ; and if its aim were merely to paralyse her attacking power, critics could object the strategic insufficiency of such an aim after the failure of a German offensive in the West which was intended to be decisive, and once all available German forces had subsequently been sent eastwards precisely in order to gain a decisive victory *there*. To rest content under such circumstances with "paralysing" the enemy in the East implied perpetuating war on two fronts in its most dangerous form. The capture of Belgrade on October 9th, 1915, followed by that of the Serbian corridor, brought no compensating advantage to Germany, since the occupation of Salonika by the Allies and the blockade of the northern Mediterranean shores deprived Serbia's defeat of all decisive consequences. Russia's Armies fought so well during the fall on the Stochod and the Strypa, they manœuvred so skilfully in view of securing the Ukraine and leaning for support on the Rumanian frontier, that her early recovery could be confidently anticipated. And should Russia be able to attack

the Germans in 1916 from the bridgeheads of Riga, Dünaburg, Postavy, Rovno, and Tarnopol, this would nullify all the effects of Germany's victories in 1915—a state of affairs the more dangerous owing to Austria-Hungary's having already lost her best troops.

The first decisive strategic turning-point in the Great War occurred in September 1914, when the German advance in the West came to a stop ; in January 1916 events announced the advent of the second. In 1916 Germany herself commenced operations by an attack on the formidable French fortress of Verdun, which failed. But neither side obtained a decisive success anywhere in 1916. An Austrian offensive against the Italian left flank was brought to a standstill on the plateau of Asiago ; a Russian break-through smashed Austria's eastern front, but the assailants were ultimately thrown back by the Germans ; and the great Franco-British attack on the Somme produced no result. Neither did the naval battle off Jutland, on May 31st, modify the situation. But Rumania's entry into the war on August 28th was fraught with grave danger for Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, whom William II—as usual too late—now called to the supreme command of all German Armies, succeeded, however, in averting also this danger, and the German troops occupied Rumania. But in February 1917 the United States joined the Allies, and this more than counter-balanced Russia's final breakdown eight months later. At the very moment when Russia collapsed under the fearful twofold weight of war and revolution ; when public opinion in France and Great Britain, discouraged by the renewed failure of the Allied offensive, this time on the Aisne and Lys, began to incline to peace ; when Pope Benedict XV's peace message still echoed throughout Europe's belligerent nations, weary of three years' unceasing butchery—Germany's Foreign Secretary, Von Kuhlmann, solemnly declared in the Reichstag, on October 9th, 1917, that there could be no question of Germany ever purchasing peace at the price of Alsace-Lorraine. "Can Germany," asked Kuhlmann, "make any concessions to France in respect of Alsace-Lorraine ?" And he himself replied : "No, never." He added : "What we are fighting for, what we shall continue to fight for to the last drop of our blood, is not phantastic

conquest, but the integrity of the German Empire." But the effect which might otherwise have been produced by this implicit acceptance of a peace based on the *status quo ante bellum* was lost owing to the speaker's emphatic insistence on the necessity of Germany retaining Alsace-Lorraine. On the other hand, he omitted to refer to Belgium, whose restoration constituted the first articles of the British "moderates'" peace programme.

The great value, not only of the material, but also of the moral, aid brought by America to the Allies was clearly evidenced in this connection exactly three months after Kühlmann's speech, when President Wilson, in a Message to Congress dated January 8th, 1918, said: "The wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine—which has unsettled the peace of the world nearly fifty years—should be righted in order that peace may once more be made in the interest of all." This declaration marks yet another turning-point in the war. America affirmed her solidarity with France and Great Britain. Wilson trumped the Alsatian card played by Kühlmann, whilst the Belgian card was cancelled before being played at all.

The last political phase of the Great War began. The two-thousand-year-old struggle for the Rhine appeared in its true historic significance, challenging Germany to a duel with the whole Western world.

On July 18th, 1918, the Allies, reinforced by newly landed American contingents, broke into the flank of the German advanced positions, and on August 9th they thrust back the German Army on the Somme. It was the beginning of the end. The German troops retreated gradually in perfect order through North-Eastern France and Belgium. On September 28th General Ludendorff suggested to the German Government that it should propose an immediate Armistice.

The story of the Central Powers' tragic collapse after holding practically the entire civilized world and a considerable part of the uncivilized one at bay during more than fifty months, is too well known to need recounting here. But if Germany finally lost the war, the undying glory nevertheless remained to her Armies of having fought unflinchingly and faced the enemy uninterruptedly up to the very last, and of not having opened their country's frontiers to an invader.

And they accomplished this tremendous feat in the teeth of almost insuperable difficulties—abandoned by their allies, with the enemy in front of them, and treason and revolution behind them.

Once again was no battle fought on the banks of that river where the Great War's origin is to be sought ; once again did the passes through the Vosges and the Ardennes, did the Argonnes and the Scheldt, resound to the violent clash of arms ; once again did ancient strategic laws reassert their supremacy ; and once again did the victor covet the entire Rhine basin. The mighty superstructure reared by Bismarck's genius fell, and great was the fall of it. But its fundaments remain. Everything henceforth depends on their solidarity—or, in other words, on the strength of the idea underlying Germany's unity. For the first time in history the struggle for Germany's existence and the struggle for the Rhine are merged into each other and form an indivisible whole. Meanwhile the world coalition has triumphed over Germany and her allies, and dictates its will.

On June 28th, 1919—the fifth anniversary of those Serajevo murders which set the world ablaze—peace was signed in the Galérie des Glaces at Versailles. The Allies intended this historic hall, in which diplomatists from every continent assembled, to be symbolical of an historic act of solemn reparation. But appearances were deceptive. The Treaty of Versailles was not a pact voluntarily subscribed to by both parties after discussion, but an instrument of violence bearing all the characteristic traits of a one-sided contract arbitrarily dictated by victors to vanquished.

Under its terms Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig, West Prussia, Posen, Danzig, Memel, and Eupen and Malmédy ; all her colonies ; and practically her whole war-fleet and merchant navy. The Allies detached the Saar basin from Germany and placed it under the nominal control of the newly founded League of Nations during a period of fifteen years, with the scarcely veiled intention of incorporating it, at the expiration of that period, by means of a carefully gerrymandered plebiscite, with France. As for Upper Silesia, the Allies left the question of its future *status* to be decided by a plebiscite, but under such conditions as could reasonably

enable Poland to hope to acquire valuable parts of this highly developed, homogeneous region. The Treaty reduced Germany's Army to 100,000 men, and forbade her to maintain an air fleet. The Rhineland became occupied territory, destined to serve as a glacis for the Allies, also during a period of fifteen years—France being thus afforded a possibility of reviving the Rhenish Confederation of Napoleon's days. Stringent restrictions were placed on Germany's economic development ; and the Allies declared Germany liable to reconstruct the devastated areas in France, and to pay reparations for all loss and damage suffered by themselves—the amount of such reparations to be determined subsequently.

Austria and Hungary likewise lost heavily. The Treaty of St. Germain (September 19th, 1919) extended Italy's north-eastern frontier to the Brenner, and she also obtained Trieste. The Yugoslav territories of the former Habsburg Monarchy were united to Serbia, with whom Montenegro was also incorporated. Rumania acquired Transylvania and the Banate, whilst retaining the Dobrudcha and Bessarabia. Bohemia, with the addition of its frontier regions inhabited by Slovaks, became the Czechoslovakian Republic. The Allies created a vast Polish State, with the object of substituting it for Russia as France's ally in Eastern Europe. They reduced Hungary to the proportions of a purely Magyar State ; and limited Austria to Vienna, to that part of the Danube valley situated above the capital, and to the Alpine districts north of the Brenner Pass. In order to prevent Germany, amputated of some of her fairest regions in the West, East, and North, from partially regaining her strength in another direction, the Allies forbade the political union of Germany and Austria ; whilst they confided conjointly to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania, the task of strictly supervising Austria and Hungary.

Whilst the Allies, with a light heart and apparently with the greatest ease, thus carved out Central Europe anew, the fire continued to smoulder in the Near East. All the efforts of the Western Powers to conciliate Turkey's demand with their own claims and those of Greece failed. Mustapha Kemel Pasha collected the remnants of the Turkish Army at Angora, and declared himself independent of Stamboul, in order to prevent Turkey's dismemberment. It was not a mere accident

that the World War broke out in the Balkans. And although Russia and Bulgaria had been eliminated from the number of claimants to the "Sick Man's" heritage, the Near Eastern problem remained unsolved. Mutual jealousy of the Western Powers effectually prevented the fire on the Bosphorus from being extinguished.

In the Pacific Ocean, also, the seeds of new conflicts were abundantly sown. The Allies purchased Japan's help during the Great War by the cession to her of Kiaochow, Germany's sphere of influence in Shantung, and all the German South Sea colonies north of the Equator; whilst Germany's colonies south of the Equator were given to Australia. The potential danger contained in these arrangements soon became manifest in the increased naval armaments of Japan and the United States.

The Paris Conference entirely lacked any sort of influence, direct or indirect, on Russian affairs. Every attempt to overthrow the Bolshevik *régime* by means of Russian Emigrant Armies failed, and the Western Powers were utterly unable to impose their will on Soviet Russia. The entire immense region situated between the Dnieper and the mouth of the Amur remained uneffected by the violent changes which were transforming Europe; and Poland, with her 30 million inhabitants, henceforth separated the latter from Asia.

All these events took place under the eyes, and with the express sanction, of Woodrow Wilson—the man who enunciated the principles of nationality, of national self-determination, and of the freedom of the seas.

Breaking with all precedents, President Wilson did not hesitate to leave America and come to Paris to prepare the various Peace Treaties behind closed doors, conjointly with M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and Signor Orlando. Dominated by the one idea of bringing humanity salvation in the shape of an eternal Covenant of the League of Nations, Wilson sacrificed his own principles to the accomplishment of his pet scheme, forgetful of the fact that in October 1918 he had carried on a correspondence with Germany. In this correspondence he specified certain conditions, scrupulously fulfilled by Germany, and in exchange he himself gave definite undertakings accepted by Allies and Germans alike as fundamental *a priori* conditions of a future peace. But in return

for French and British support of his Covenant, Wilson subsequently abandoned his famous Fourteen Points.

Already on December 4th, 1918, when sailing from New York for Brest, Wilson resolved to make these concessions. He had nothing further in common with the President who, in his Message to Congress on January 22nd, 1917, declared that "only a peace between equals can be a lasting one," and who, in another Message on February 11th, 1918, stated that "self-determination is . . . an imperative principle of action which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril." At the Conference table he proved no match for M. Clemenceau or Mr. Lloyd George. And when the United States Senate declined to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, it was already too late to repair the damage done.

The framers of the Treaty skilfully based its moral justification on the fiction of Germany's sole responsibility for the war. The confession of her war-guilt, wrung by force from Germany, afforded a pretext for demanding the surrender of persons deemed by the Allies responsible for the outbreak of hostilities, notably of William II, and a number of German officers to whom "war crimes" were imputed, and also excluding Germany temporarily from the League of Nations.¹ It served likewise to impress public opinion in neutral countries with the righteousness of the Allies' demands. This assertion of Germany's war-guilt constituted the foundation of a Treaty which, in the course of 441 Articles, meted-out punishment to Germany, and exacted reparation from her, on account of a war, the sole responsibility for which was arbitrarily ascribed to her. The Allies were content to ignore the historic development of events during the preceding half-century, and found it convenient to keep their own archives rigidly closed. They preferred to cling to the fact that Germany, at the last moment, allowed herself to be manœuvred into the false position of aggressor, and infringed a Belgian neutrality which for many years had ceased to exist *de facto*.

This new political doctrine of the criminality of acts of

¹ Paragraph 231 of the Treaty of Versailles reads as follows: ". . . Germany acknowledges that she and her allies being solely responsible for the war, they are likewise responsible for all loss and damage inflicted on the Allied and Associated Governments and their subjects in consequence of the war caused by Germany and her allies."

war satisfied the sense of justice of nations whose conscience had been profoundly stirred by the horrors perpetrated during the past five years. Thus the authors of the Treaty of Versailles found no difficulty in justifying on moral grounds what was in reality a work of vengeance. But the shortcomings of the Treaty could not be concealed. It arbitrarily tore asunder racial, economic, geographical, and other natural ties, destroyed the entire Central European organism, sowed the seeds of hatred and distrust, diminished production the world over, and became an inexhaustible source of universal suffering and discontent.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Treaty of Versailles, based on the model of that of Tilsit, should bear manifest traces of evanescence. Three years after its ratification the world was farther removed from real peace than it had ever been. The Entente Powers were divided among themselves, Germany groaned under an impossible load of debt, and Europe seethed with unrest.

The real victor in the Great War was certainly not Russia, who, having set out to conquer the Dardanelles, ended in total chaos and a bloody despotism; not Great Britain, who desired to eliminate German industrial and maritime competition; not even Italy, although she definitely achieved her unity and extended her frontiers; not even the United States, whose tardy intervention on the battlefield proved decisive. *The real victor was France, who had fought solely for mastery over the Rhine.* French statesmen in 1919 could repeat Servien's words, spoken in 1648 with reference to the Treaty of Westphalia¹: "Je crois qu'il se faudra contenter que chacun explique le traité comme il l'entend." France had once more established her hegemony over the Rhine. The struggle for this river arose again, full of potential danger to European peace, from out of the Treaty of Versailles and the ruins accumulated by the Great War.

Russia, driven from the Dardanelles and the Balkans behind the Dnieper, found herself separated from Europe by Poland. From a traditional bulwark of reaction, she became a centre of revolutionary ferment. But if the new rulers in Moscow assiduously propagated the gospel of communism, they none the less adhered to Russia's historic foreign policy

¹ See p. 109.

of imperialist expansion. French capitalists lost the twenty milliard francs lent to the Tsarist Government for armament purposes. This loss mattered little to France, being more than counterbalanced by the conquest of the Rhine.

Great Britain found herself relieved of the pressure formerly exerted by Russia on the Indian frontier and the Dardanelles ; Germany's fleet had been destroyed and German competition had ceased to exist. But Great Britain's triumph was so complete as to be excessive. The balance of power, which she considered in 1914 to be menaced by Germany, far from being restored, now came definitely to an end. Mr. Lloyd George reversed William Pitt's policy. When, carried away by his fiery temperament, he gave out his celebrated "knock out" parole, and the British nation applied itself with renewed vigour to the congenial task of "tearing Germany to pieces," Great Britain's permanent interests were in nowise furthered thereby. On the contrary, they were sacrificed on the altar of her alliance with France. Subsequently she thought to bridle her old rival's ambition, and during the peace negotiations vainly strove to impose limits on French hegemony. But it was too late, since Great Britain lacked the necessary freedom of action to keep France away from the Rhine. Whereas Woodrow Wilson signed the Treaty of Versailles in complete ignorance of the nature of the forces operating in European politics, Lloyd George still flattered himself with being able to keep French expansion within certain bounds. But the means he adopted to this end proved inadequate. Germany's disarmament, dismemberment, and enslavement deprived Great Britain of any sufficient counterpoise to French imperialism.

The Allies, it is true, had only guaranteed France the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine ; but the effect of secret arrangements concluded during the war continued to make itself felt. The occupation of the Saar basin, the Palatinate, and the Rhineland, furnished France with so many opportunities for consolidating her supremacy in Europe ; whilst a close Franco-Belgian alliance was substituted for Belgium's pre-war neutrality. Great Britain finally lost that Flemish glacis, on which 300,000 British soldiers sacrificed their lives.

Three years after the conclusion of peace at Versailles Great Britain found herself reduced to impotence, and

Germany, as in days of yore, became a mere instrument of French policy. French statesmen fully grasped the advantages presented by the situation thus created. When France's Army returned in triumph to the Rhine, her population counted only some 39 million souls, but her vast Colonial Empire offered such immense resources that she could assert herself from a military standpoint with the strength of a nation of 100 million inhabitants. After the conclusion of peace France still continued to maintain a million men under arms, in order to lend the necessary support to her expansionist policy. She assured her influence in Poland, in Yugoslavia, in Czechoslovakia, by means of loans; concluded secret alliances with these three States; and settled down in the Rhineland in view of a lasting occupation. Palatinate and Rhineland were governed as in former times by decrees issued by French generals, whilst Germany's "defaults" served as a pretext for "sanctions" consisting in levying enormous contributions in cash and kind, and in the occupation of important strategic points. The Rhenish tricolour, originally invented by General Hoche,¹ reappeared in the hands of separatists induced by French gold to agitate *pour l'idée rhénane*, *i.e.* for the separation of the Rhineland from Germany. By these methods France obtained possession within two years of the bridgeheads of Düsseldorf, Ruhrort, and Duisburg,² and thereby of the gateways giving access to the Ruhr basin. But the French occupation, by the temptation which it held out to the inhabitants to create their own State and hoist their own flag, also acted as a dissolving ferment on the population—whereby we must remember that if France was generally ready to support the separatist agitation, she could also disavow it should political circumstances make it appear advisable to do so. She systematically pursued, by the most varied methods, a policy of "peaceful penetration"—by the propagation of French literature, the creation of French banks, the construction of barracks for French troops, the settlement of French families. Twentieth-century French imperialism followed in the footsteps of all its forerunners since Richelieu and Louis XIV.

France steadily carried-out this carefully reasoned and

¹ See p. 306.

² Which she evacuated in 1925. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

well-organized policy under the eyes of the British garrison at Cologne. But however sure of themselves the French might outwardly appear, a lurking fear of Germany's reawakening nevertheless inspired their measures. French statesmen were aware of France's biological inferiority as compared with Germany. They overlooked the fact that in 1919 the German nation entertained no hatred of France. It was reserved for them to arouse this hatred by a short-sighted and inconsiderate attitude resembling that of Shylock ruthlessly insisting on his pound of flesh.

At the close of 1922 the Reparations Commission pronounced Germany to have defaulted as regards her deliveries of coal. Hereupon the French Government, taking advantage of a decision previously arrived at in London, determined to take matters into its own hands and to adopt a course of action independently of Great Britain and Italy, but conjointly with Belgium. Interpreting the Treaty of Versailles after their own fashion, the French and Belgian Governments despatched, on January 11th, 1923, a joint Army of Occupation into the Ruhr basin. This enabled French troops to secure possession of the routes giving access to North-West Germany, and to lay hands simultaneously on the most highly developed industrial region in Europe. The French Government declared the Ruhr to constitute a valuable pledge which France was resolved to exploit herself in the event of Germany refusing to fulfil her treaty obligations. But, in reality, it saw in the occupation of the Ruhr a measure of military, rather than economic, security. France not only penetrated deeper into German territory, she now also held the key to the North Sea coast, which she could threaten in the flank. Bremen and Hamburg, the estuaries of the Ems, Weser, and Elbe, appeared equally menaced by this latest French advance, which likewise imperilled Holland's safety. When making Hamburg the main prop of the French Empire in its struggle against Great Britain, Napoleon had indicated to his successors, over one hundred years previously, the road they should take.

In 1923 Great Britain lacked the means of restraining her allies. Cologne, garrisoned by British troops, formed a mere enclave in the territory occupied by French and Belgian Armies. Great Britain's hands being tied alike at home and

abroad, France continued to enjoy unrestricted liberty of decision.

As for Germany, she found herself entirely powerless. Party quarrels, which survived the downfall of the Hohenzollerns, were, it is true, momentarily silenced ; but economic impotence and political incoherence rendered any effective action impossible. Ever since the fatal day when the Allies extorted from Germany under duress the confession of her alleged "war-guilt," Germany, deprived on her internal equilibrium, had perpetually oscillated between a policy of fulfilment and a policy of resistance ; torn by internal dissensions, she resembled a ship adrift on a stormy sea, and proved altogether incapable of effectively opposing an active aggression to which even the Treaty of Versailles itself afforded no semblance of justification. She nevertheless pulled herself together, abandoned her lethargy, and endeavoured to utilize her labour organizations as instruments of protest against France's high-handed policy. The inhabitants of the Ruhr basin determined to offer passive resistance to the invaders, and the German Government readily supported them in this decision. Germany sacrificed, first milliards, and subsequently billions, of a depreciated currency to prolong this resistance and enable the unemployed masses of the newly occupied region to obtain their daily bread. But economic weapons proved in the long run powerless against a State able to rely on military force. This was inevitable ; for passive resistance on the part of a weak country always ends in a dilemma—either it must lead eventually to active resistance or it must terminate by a capitulation.

This turned out to be the case here. Tenacious Westphalians, excitable Rhinelanders, liberty-loving inhabitants of the Palatinate, fought a heroic, but hopeless, fight. France took advantage with ruthless consistency of the situation. Although herself adversely affected in no small measure by Germany's resistance, she resolutely set-about breaking that resistance by force of arms. Her troops occupied Germany's Western borderland from Kehl to Offenburg, from Ludwigshafen to Mannheim and Darmstadt ; they interrupted the railway service on the right bank of the Rhine, cut off the entire occupied territory from the rest of Germany, controlled the Black Forest Passes and the Neckar Gate ; they reconquered

their ancient central position around Mayence, on the Taunus Hills, and on the Lahn—a position which threw open to them the road leading upstream along the Main ; whilst 100,000 French soldiers securely held the Ruhr basin itself. France could thus shape strategic conditions on the Rhine according to her will, and the continual extension of the zone of occupation on the right bank once more clearly revealed the fundamental unity of the entire Rhine basin. The Rhine became again a base of operations against Eastern and Northern Germany. Great Britain remained an impotent spectator of all these things, whilst America proclaimed her disinterestedness in European complications. Germany thus waited vainly for any active support from those quarters.

Europe's economic life, which, instead of recovering its stability, had grown ever more and more chaotic since the war, now seemed threatened with irreparable ruin. Had Germany, in this dilemma, possessed sufficient strength to warrant an armed uprising, the latter would certainly have taken place. But she had been effectively disarmed ; her arsenals were empty, she lacked an air fleet, her artillery no longer existed, and her entire military organization was dissolved. The arms she still retained barely sufficed for the small Army which the Peace Treaty allowed her to maintain, and which she kept in readiness to suppress Communist risings.

Passive resistance thus ended, in the fall of 1923, with Germany's unconditional capitulation. Drained of her resources and deprived of all her rights, it proved impossible for her to continue it. France once again successfully asserted her will to power in the teeth of universal disapproval. Thousands of peaceful German citizens had been thrown into gaol, hundreds of thousands expelled from their homes with their families, entire forests felled, vast sums of money and immense supplies of provisions confiscated, numerous persons executed, and the German administration in the occupied region systematically demolished. Eliminating the German Government, the victors now proceeded to conclude pacts directly with the Ruhr industrialists, and an era of industrial bondage commenced. And yet Germany's passive resistance, however unwise it may retrospectively appear from many points of view, proved to be not absolutely fruitless, for it

demonstrated that her national spirit had not been wholly extinguished.

After taking office as Premier in January 1912, M. Raymond Poincaré set to work resolutely with a view to hastening the outbreak of war. The Treaty of Versailles having been drawn-up, he abandoned the Presidency of the République in order to put—again as Premier—the finishing touch on a work which, in his capacity as successor of the great French imperialist statesmen of past centuries, he carried out boldly, skilfully, and ruthlessly. He adopted, it is true, new methods, but whilst doing so he none the less remained faithful to the historic traditions of French policy. And when, at the close of 1923, Germany's passive resistance broke down, M. Poincaré appeared very near achieving his aim. France obtained a secure footing on either bank of the Rhine, whilst Germany's economic enslavement and the erection of a Rhenish buffer-State under French protection seemed assured.

The Treaty of Versailles resembles in numerous respects that of Westphalia. Executed by French Armies conformably with arbitrary interpretations placed on it by French statesmen, it opens wide to France the road into the heart of Germany. To many it must have seemed during the years following the war as if Louis XIV's "good old times" had returned. Determined efforts are being made to gallicize Alsace, which gladly welcomed its old masters' return in 1918. The Saar basin has become an economic dependency of France, whilst determined efforts are being made to draw the Rhineland and the Palatinate ever more and more into France's sphere of influence. France has again been able to delimit her eastern frontiers as she wished and to encircle Germany with an iron ring, whereby Poland and Czechoslovakia are substituted for Russia, whilst the Flemish glacis is henceforth controlled by France's Belgian ally. In 1923 France's expansionist policy triumphed. The advanced positions she occupied on the right bank of the Rhine enabled her to consolidate at leisure her rule on its left bank. Her power was again concentrated, as in former days, on that river, transformed anew into a French base of operations and into the corner-stone of French hegemony in Europe. In 1923, however, the strength of her position was accrued by her holding and exploiting a vast homogeneous industrial region

watered by the Saar, the Rhine, and the Ruhr—a region which had rapidly grown to world-wide importance during the twentieth century. France developed her astonishing activity without paying the slightest heed to Great Britain's mild protests. Her traditional policy defied all changes wrought by time. In 1923 Great Britain found herself still confronted by Louis XIV under the mask of M. Raymond Poincaré. By inverting the historic front in the struggle for the Rhine, the Great War reversed the historic state of things, the consequence being to tie Great Britain's hands.

The predominance acquired by France as a result of the Great War does not manifest itself only in Western Europe, but also in the Mediterranean and the Near East. France supported Turkey against Greece, Great Britain's *protégée*, and by her support enabled Mustapha Kemel to expel the Greeks from Asia Minor. France herself has remained in Syria, where she sits like a wedge between Egypt and Mesopotamia. She has opened out communications between her North African colonies, on the one hand, Nigeria and the Cameroons, on the other; and she has effectively eliminated Spanish, British, and Italian influence in Western Morocco. She has drawn closer the ties uniting her to Yugoslavia and Rumania, and her shadow can again be seen in Holland and Switzerland.

But the foundations of this proud and stately edifice dominating the ruins accumulated by the Great War—an edifice, the rearing of which seems to portend the advent of a second *siecle français*—are less secure than they appear to be. French predominance is to-day based on an exceptional concatenation of circumstances of which a skilful and energetic policy, backed by the determined will of an entire nation, has been quick to take advantage. France, nevertheless, lacks the indispensable organic strength to permanently maintain that predominance.

It is not only the physical resources which she lacks, but also the necessary creative ideas. From a military standpoint, it is true, she presents as formidable an appearance as a nation of 100 million souls. But her Army is to a large extent composed of coloured troops, and in a future European war she will even depend on the support of Polish and Czech contingents. In this respect France to-day resembles the

Rome of the later Cæsars, who proved unable to maintain her world empire without the help of foreign mercenaries. Not of her own free choice, assuredly, but compelled by iron necessity, France keeps 300,000 coloured soldiers under arms to safeguard her position on the Rhine.

To-day, when Great Britain is faced by constantly increasing economic difficulties at home and abroad, France may be able to increase her export trade in inverse proportion to the depreciation of her currency. But her prosperity is more apparent than real, since large numbers of her population who would otherwise be unemployed go to swell the ranks of her Army, whilst cheap alien labour is substituted in her fields and factories for better-paid French labour. She has lent large sums of money to Poland and other vassal States, but, on the other hand, she has hitherto neglected to pay either capital or interest of those debts which she contracted in America and Great Britain during and since the war.¹ Her predominant position in contemporary Europe is due less to her own immense resources of all kinds than to the weakness and exhaustion of her rivals.

Bismarck once uttered warning words concerning a State which, for the sake of prestige, should exceed its natural boundaries and seek to assert itself outside its natural sphere. Under William II Germany was only too inclined to forget this wise warning, and it has certainly never been heeded by France. Pre-war France, confined within her national frontiers and obeying the impulse derived from a unanimous national will, doubtless possessed greater moral strength than the France of to-day, standing astride the Rhine, and who, conscious of the inherent weakness of her position, is for ever seeking new protective guarantees against a reverse of fortune.

Since Louis XIV's days Great Britain's European policy has invariably been dictated by the desire to maintain a Continental balance of power in her own interest. The threatened disturbance of this equilibrium led six times to war with France. In 1914 Great Britain's watchword remained the same, only this time it was directed against Germany, the result—as incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles—being

¹ This was written before the conclusion of the agreements with these two countries in 1926. (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.)

to destroy definitely that very balance of power which Great Britain set out in 1914 to maintain.

Under these circumstances Great Britain saw herself in 1923 confronted by the imperative necessity of taking a momentous decision. But the latter depended on conditions far more complicated than on previous occasions. A war of unprecedented dimensions had nearly exhausted the British nation, and the British Empire's heterogeneous interests the world over were so closely interwoven as to render extreme caution advisable. And the lack of a "Continental sword" greatly impaired Great Britain's freedom of action. There was no possibility of her forming a new coalition. In the Mediterranean, Spain and Italy were bound to take not only Great Britain, but also France, into consideration. Germany, was disarmed, and appeared to be on the verge of dissolution; and neither Austria-Hungary nor Russia existed any longer as European Powers. Thus Great Britain, as we said, was confronted in 1923 by the necessity of arriving at a decision; but no one can possibly foretell when it will be taken or how it will eventually affect the great problem of Franco-British world antagonism. In the lives of nations generations may pass before a decision ripens to maturity. One thing, however, is certain—namely, that France's return to the Rhine alone brought about the position of constraint in which Great Britain found herself placed in 1923, for the very good reason that French hegemony in Europe is invariably based on France's domination of that river. The cardinal truth: that if a nation at one and the same time possesses the Seine and Rhône and controls the Rhine, it is *ipso facto* able to dominate Europe and menace Great Britain; this truth must be clear to every student of geographical and strategic conditions, and it is borne out by the lessons of history during the past two thousand years.

The weariness and social unrest engendered by the war; Germany's defeat and disarmament; a sense of obligation towards France resulting from sacrifices incurred in common—all these factors contributed to prevent Great Britain, although she saw her interests in West and East alike jeopardized by French expansion, going beyond a platonic protest when France broke into the Ruhr. But history shows us that Great Britain has invariably proved capable of recovery in

due course. Her energy and power of adaptation are less constant, more subject to fluctuation, than those of France ; but when once she concentrates her energy and sets it in motion with a definite object, durable and far-reaching effects are apt to be produced. She may be relied on to bide her time and choose her hour. She cannot afford to allow the Flemish glacis and the Rhine basin to become the monopoly of any single Continental Power. Should she abandon this fundamental and traditional principle of British policy, she must sooner or later forfeit her supremacy in her own Anglo-Saxon world, and sink to the level of a mere appendage of the European Continent.

Germany's downfall has thus produced the result of reviving the ever latent rivalry between her adversaries. Recent events have again brought home to Germany, in the most tragic manner, the great truth that her material existence, her social and political development, her moral and economic progress, are inextricably bound up with the Rhine, and that she can entertain no possible hope for the future if that river and its basin are wrested from her. A handful of Rhenish soil is worth more to Germany than an entire Polish province. Those German troops who, during the Great War, laid down their lives on the Dnieper, in the Ukraine, on the Struma, in the Syrian desert, on the shores of Finland's lakes, on the Isonzo, Sambre, Meuse, Aisne, and Marne—they all fell in reality in the struggle for the Rhine. Thus we see that this struggle involves, for Germany, more than a mere question of the fulfilment of her historic destinies, more even than a question of national existence and cohesion ; in her passionate attachment to the Rhine lies the source of her moral and spiritual strength. Germans themselves have too often lost sight of this fundamental fact. Not until the German nation, crushed by the united efforts of a whole world in arms, lay maimed and helpless on the ground and saw itself threatened with the loss of Rhine, Saar, and Ruhr, did it rediscover the roots of its national life. And if disarmed Germany's undaunted fight for her Western Marches is attributable to sentiment rather than to political instinct, this will only serve to impress more forcibly and durably on every patriotic German the historic significance of a

struggle, on the issue of which Germany's fate must ultimately depend.

Conformably with the underlying principle of French policy, methodically and persistently pursued, according to which—to quote Napoleon's words—*il faut dépayser l'esprit allemand*, the struggle for the Rhineland has become a struggle for the soul of the Rhenish population. In Germany's tenacious clinging to that soil of her forefathers, from which her adversary would fain evict her, there is assuredly an element of greatness. Her tenacity in adversity and her will to action constitute the surest pledges of Germany's future. However disunited and impotent the German nation may be at present, bleeding as it is from a thousand wounds, so long as it listens to, and understands, the great lesson taught it by the Rhine, it has no cause to despair. For as long as the struggle for the Rhine still remains undecided, Germany's future lies open before her.

Thus after two thousand years the world stands again to-day on the threshold of a great Unknown. For our part we are convinced that the historic struggle for the Rhine is still far from being definitely decided. And we are likewise convinced that the nature of the relations between France, Great Britain, and Germany, which was first determined at Bouvines in 1214, has not yet received its final solution. The possession of no river has ever been so persistently and ardently contested throughout the centuries as that of the Rhine. In this immense struggle the whole world has participated, and to-day, more than ever, the Rhine deserves the significant title bestowed on it during the Middle Ages :

RHENUS FLUMINUM PRINCEPS.

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